

BX 4700

.L3 N63





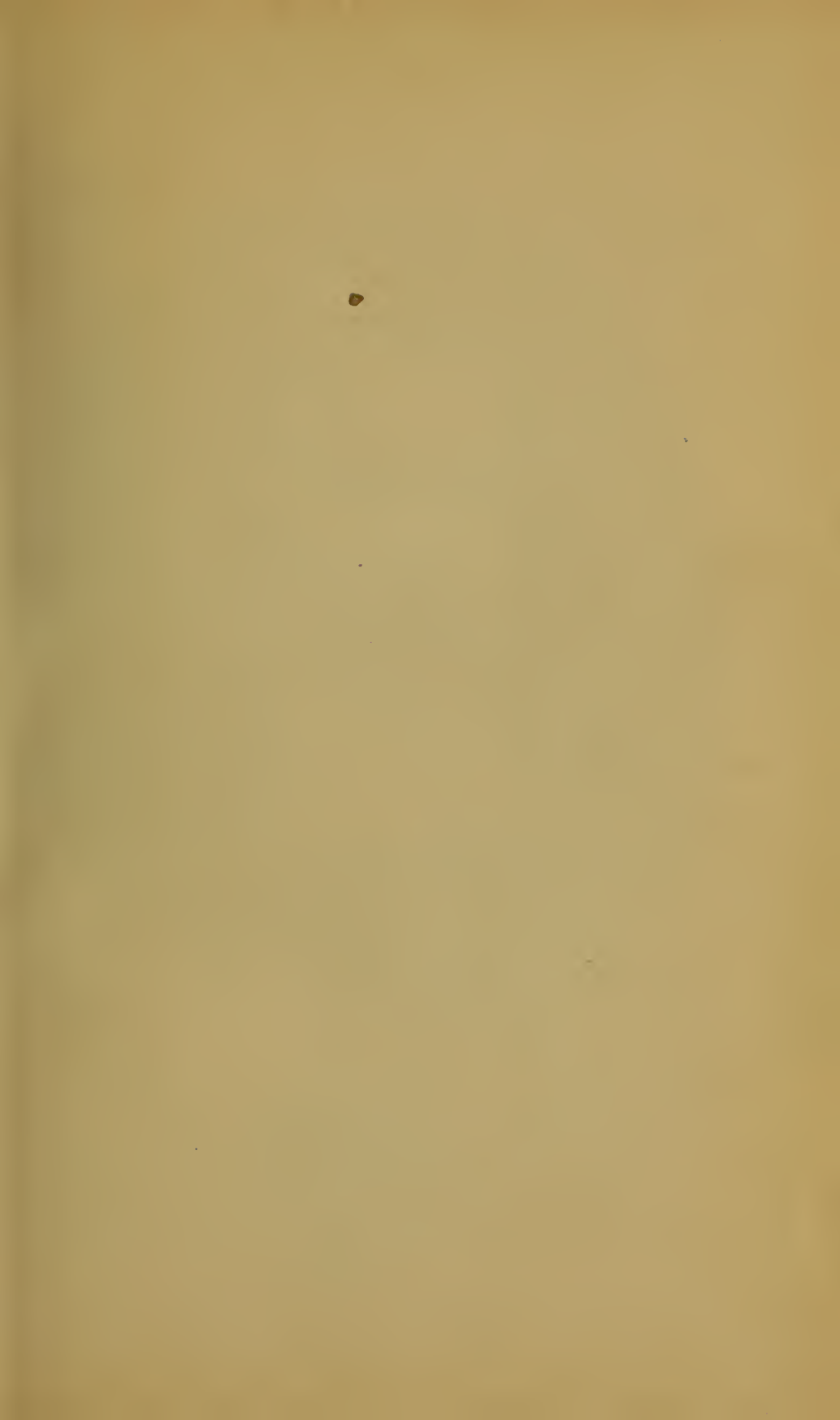




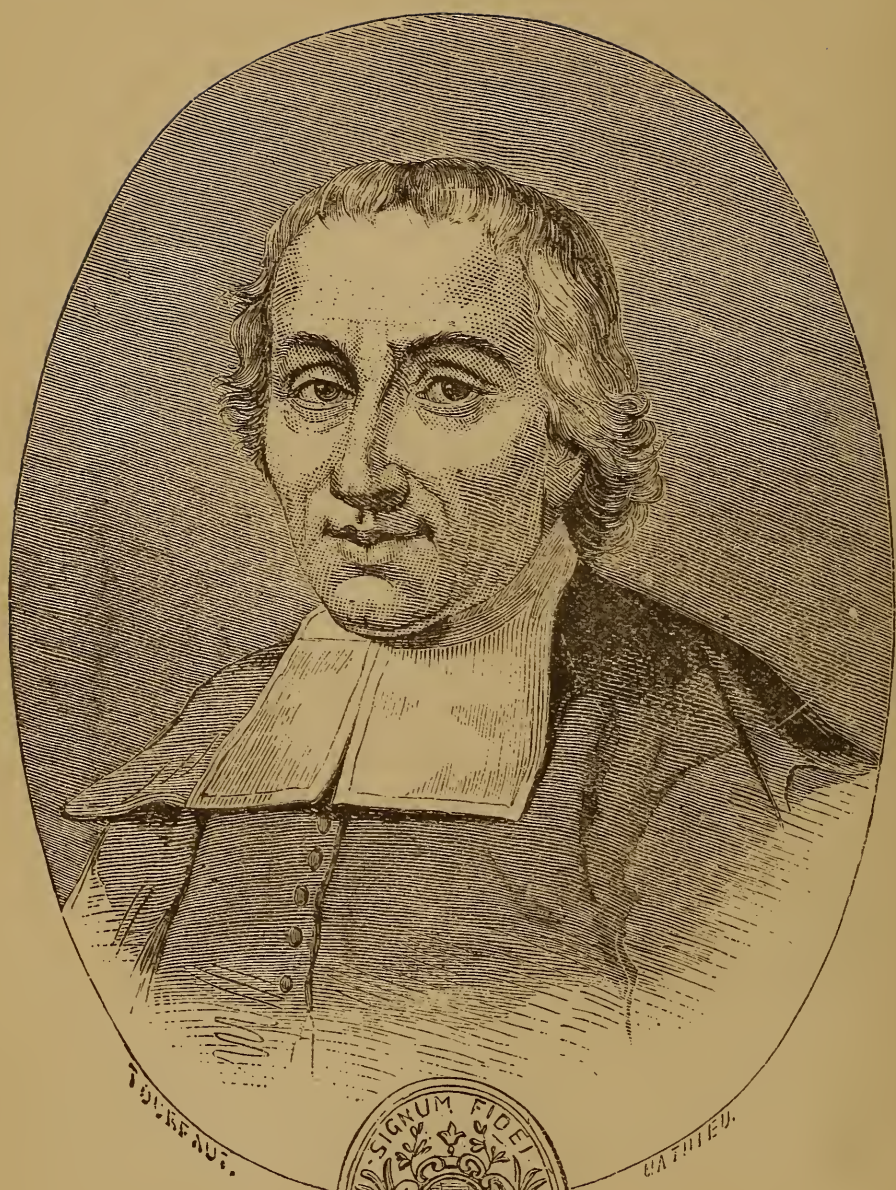












CE V.<sup>re</sup> J. B



DE LA SALLE

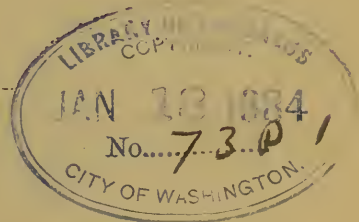
THE  
VEN. JOHN BAPTIST DE LA SALLE,  
THE TRUE FRIEND OF YOUTH,  
FOUNDER OF THE  
BROTHERS OF THE CHRISTIAN SCHOOLS.

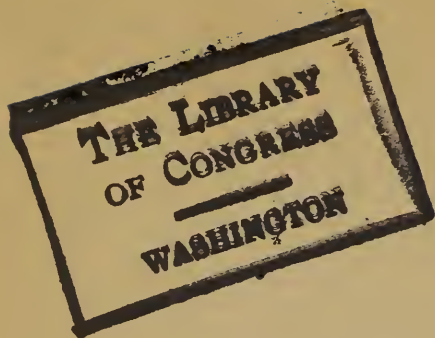
*By Noah, Francis  
Cowan.*  
SPECIALLY PREPARED FOR

AMERICAN YOUTH.

NEW YORK:  
DE LA SALLE INSTITUTE,  
48 SECOND STREET.

1884.





BX4700  
L3N63

---

Entered according to Act of Congress in the year 1884, by

JOHN P. MURPHY,  
In the Office of the Librarian of Congress at Washington.

---

---

ELECTROTYPED AND PRINTED AT  
THE NEW YORK CATHOLIC PROTECTORY,  
WEST CHESTER, N. Y.

---



TO

THE CATHOLIC BOYS OF AMERICA:

GENEROUS OF HEART TO FOLLOW GOD'S WILL,

PRAYERFUL OF SPIRIT TO OBTAIN HIS GUIDANCE,

FUTURE BROTHERS OF THE CHRISTIAN SCHOOLS,

THIS LITTLE VOLUME

IS AFFECTIONATELY DEDICATED

BY THE AUTHOR.



## INTRODUCTION.

---

The world can find no labor more important, saints ask no greater privilege, than the care of youth. The greatest struggle that has ever been carried on, is that which is now waged between the Church and her enemies to determine who will train up the child, who will mould its character, direct its future, and thus, in great measure, determine its eternal welfare. If we open the pages of Holy Writ, the same lesson is taught : the dignity of the child is shown in every page, his education is the object of the wisest laws, strengthened by the most wonderful promises to those who comply therewith ; while the direst calamities threaten the derelict in so sacred a cause.

“Bring them up in the discipline and correction of the Lord,” said the Apostle who elsewhere declared, “I became all things to all men that I might save all.” He knew that “they that instruct many unto justice shall shine as stars for all eternity.”

“Take this child and nurse him for me ; I will give thee thy wages.” These words, spoken by the kind-hearted daughter of Pharoah have been again and again repeated to encourage those who make the care of youth their life-tasks and in so acting they have been enabled to repeat to their little flocks : “Come, children, hearken to me ; I will teach you the fear of the Lord.”

Time, which changes so many things, has made important alterations in the position and sway which the child holds in society. To-day, as a thousand years ago, youth is the object of the most tender affection ; but, more than a thousand years ago, he is now enabled to raise himself to a much higher point of excellence. Society unites in procuring him every possible



advantage ; laws are promulgated to defend his interests ; the Church, as ever the protectress of the weak and the lowly, raises her voice to bless those who help, and to anathematize those who seek to injure the dearest portion of her flock. In carrying out the teachings of our Divine Lord, the Church declares that whatever is done to the least of these little ones is done to God himself. Their interests are hers, and she ceases not to proclaim : “ Give me the souls of the little ones for whom Christ has died.”

And thus we find throughout her history, that the Church has fostered the child as only a mother can foster it. A pagan world had for thousands of years declared that only the strong and hearty should be allowed to live ; among pagan nations, brutal parents, as in China, have been, and are still, allowed to feed their swine on poor, sickly, helpless babes : deformity of body is in such countries a short road to destruction. In earlier days little ones were offered up in sacrifice, their burning flesh and writhing limbs being supposed to propitiate the gods to whom they were so barbarously offered. But, behold ! a change comes o’er the scene ! “ A virgin brings forth a son,” the Babe of Bethlehem is born ; wise men from the East hasten to adore him. A cruel king seeks the Divine Infant’s life, but an angel comes to his assistance. Jesus, the son of Mary is saved ; he is rescued from cruel hands. Like Moses of old, he is taken into a strange country. He grows in wisdom, in age and in grace. He is brought back in due time to his native land, waxes strong, begins his public mission, and all through His wonderful career, in which he goes about doing good, his constant appeal is, “ Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of heaven.” He threatens with the direst calamities those who scandalize the least of these little ones, whose angels, he declares, are constantly before his Father who is in heaven. As though this were not sufficient,

he declares that it were better that a man should have a millstone tied about his neck, and that he should be cast into the sea, rather than that he should scandalize one of those little ones for whom he came to die. One of his last words on his journey to Calvary, tells of his ever constant love for children. When the pious women gather around and weep over him, He says in his own benignant and affectionate manner : " Weep not for me, but weep rather for yourselves and for your children." When the years of his mortal career were ended ; when he went to his Father to prepare mansions for his faithful disciples he forgot not the children. Scarcely had the Church escaped from the clutches of persecuting tyrants, when her first care was to prepare homes for children either forsaken by unnatural parents, or left orphans by martyred fathers and mothers. All through her early history, asylums were founded in which the orphan was harbored and educated. Her bishops founded homes which were confided to willing hands ; the early saints gave their lives and their fortunes to befriend helpless waifs ; monasteries opened their doors to educate them, and throughout the whole course of her history, the Church of Christ shows how faithfully she has carried out her divinely appointed mission to take the child and bring him up in the path in which he should go, that even in his old age he should not depart therefrom.

But among those who have thus shown themselves the special friends of Christ's little ones, there are some whose names shine with unwonted lustre. St. Vincent de Paul and the Venerable De La Salle may safely be said to be the prominent figures in this God-like mission. What Vincent did for the body, La Salle accomplished for the mind, the soul.

Not content with taking care of the poor and helpless, the Church, in her charity, has raised up apostles of youth whose life has been spent in caring for the spiritual and intellectual welfare of those who, so far as their mere bodily wants were con-

cerned, had no reason for complaint. Such as these were exposed to forget God in the mere worldly happiness they enjoyed. Others there were, who, though under the paternal roof, felt not the benign influence of a father's care or a mother's love; who, while receiving such slight attention as enabled them to preserve life, were yet so far neglected as to be moral waifs. Of both such classes, the Venerable De La Salle was the friend in need, the friend indeed. To both, he gave up all that life has of dearest, that home has of nearest, and making himself the apostle of youth became all to all children that he might save all to Christ.

How far he succeeded, the following pages seek partially to determine. It is sincerely hoped, nay, fondly believed that such an example of self-sacrifice must appeal with untold strength and force to the mind of youth, naturally noble and intelligent, such as our American boys are. If, while perusing these pages, such youths find themselves impelled to love and revere all that is true, beautiful and good in such a life, the author will be more than repaid for his labor of love. The hope of such a happy result has led him to prepare this special Life for the bright Catholic boys of our beloved America.

If, in addition to loving and admiring, even some few, nay, even one, more favored than the rest, should, like De La Salle, give up all to follow Christ, whose greatest love was shown to little ones, then, indeed, his highest hopes shall be tenfold realized. To-day, the Christian religious teacher is the want of the hour. God grant that the number may be increased; that the fold of Christ's lambs be made larger, through the lessons taught, the examples given, the plan furnished by the "True Friend of Youth," the Children's Apostle, the Venerable John Baptist De La Salle.

House of Studies, Amawalk.

Feast of the Holy Rosary, 1883.



## CHAPTER I.

*The Catholic idea of a Saint.—Cardinal Newman's description.—These views dwelt upon.—The Saint best knows and pities human weakness. John Baptist is baptized.—Early impressions.—Forecasts.—Visits to Churches.—Miniature Altar.—Exalted idea of the Priesthood.—Influence of the Crucifix and Rosary.—Devotion to the Sacred Passion and to Mary, Virgin most Pure.*

“Catholics have an instinctive veneration for those who have the traces of heaven upon them,” for such traces indicate the saint. But what is a Saint? By what signs may we know him? May we hope to meet such a one during the course of our lives? These are all important, interesting questions. There are few subjects, indeed, upon which men have ideas more vague than those which they conceive of God's special servants. His Eminence Cardinal Newman assures us that none but Catholics can fully conceive of such a character as is implied in the term Saint, and even among Catholics, there must be a degree of familiarity with the workings of God in his Saints, to enable us to point them out here below. It is only the initiated few who can point out and say: behold one in whom God dwells, and delights to make himself known to mortals. Saints are of a growth hidden to ordinary eyes, and yet, thank God, the Church is never without those whose lives are such as Saints lead. She is never without a very large number who, walking in the way of the commandments, without, however, embracing the evangelical counsels, go to make up the number saved in the redeeming blood of Christ Jesus, and who, by their lives, in the midst of the world and its

temptations, prove that the grace of God is all powerful ; that whoso chooses to take up his cross and follow the Crucified, will find strength in his weakness, light in darkness, energy amidst discouragements, joy in his tribulations.

We are all called to be Saints ; the elect are all such ; heaven is peopled by their numbers and earth is blessed by their presence.

Yet, to the truly Catholic heart, the term Saint, as used by the Church, when applied to her canonized children, implies a height of virtue, a depth of religious conviction, an extent of charity before which ordinarily good lives pale. " Very various are the Saints, their variety being a token of God's workmanship ; but, however various, and whatever was their special line of duty, they have been heroes in it ; they have attained such noble self-command, they have so crucified the flesh, they have so renounced the world ; they are so meek, so gentle, so tender-hearted, so merciful, so sweet, so cheerful, so full of prayer, so diligent, so forgetful of injuries ; they have sustained such great and continued pains, they have persevered in such vast labors, they have made such valiant confessions, they have wrought such abundant miracles, they have been blessed with such strange successes, that they have set up a standard before us of truth, of magnanimity, of holiness, of love. . . . They are always our standards of right and good ; they are raised up to be monuments and lessons, they remind us of God, they introduce us into the unseen world, they teach us what Christ loves, they trace out for us the way which leads heavenward. They are to us who see them, what wealth, notoriety, rank and name are to the multitude of men who live in darkness,—objects of our veneration and of our homage."

Shall we venture to add a line to so lovely a picture ? Not certainly with the purpose of making the character more attractive. Yet, with a view to bringing it within the grasp of the

youthful readers for whom we write, let us subjoin a few words of explanation or rather of reflection.

To the ordinary mind, the idea of a saint seems strangely coupled with that of one who is morose, estranged from his fellows, void of those affections which make life dear : he is looked upon as being without interest in the welfare of society, dead to its pursuits, indifferent to its success or failure. Yet, take the comprehensive definition or character of the saint as furnished by Cardinal Newman, and how fully all such false notions are exploded.

A saint, in whatever sphere he becomes such, is a hero. Does this not tell that nobility of character must be the basis, while grandeur of purpose is his motive through life ? A saint is a hero, whose first victories, and often not bloodless ones, have been over self, which he has curbed, bearing about in his flesh the image of Christ crucified. A saint is a hero who proves his claim to the title by faithfully fulfilling the promises made in baptism, and all through, later in life, by renouncing the world with all its charms, its seductions and its dangers. Yet, while thus heroic, self-controlled and sacrificed, there is in the saint a meekness, learned, by divine imitation, from Him who was meek and humble of heart ; there is a gentleness which must be the outgrowth of love ; a tender-heartedness which makes him take the whole world as his family, her most wayward sons as his chosen children. In the character of the saint we find persistent cheerfulness the standing rule. What would render others sombre and dejected has no other effect than to send the saint into the arms of God, through prayer ; and there, as St. Ignatius expressed it, a quarter of an hour's colloquy with the Almighty, renders him ready for any trial, "God's will being adored in all things in his regard." (1) Monks and saints are spoken of by a certain class the world-over as being

---

(1) Words of Ven De La Salle.



idlers , yet here we have them pictured truly as diligent in well-doing, so occupied in benefitting their neighbor as to be forgetful of the ill-treatment which often proves their only earthly reward. Was St. Paul an idler? Did St. Francis De Sales lose much time? Were St. Francis Xavier and the thousands



THE HOUSE IN WHICH THE VEN. DE LA SALLE WAS BORN.

who followed him to preach the gospel and then to die, were those idle? Certainly not; so far from this, they persevered in vast labors, preaching, writing, exhorting; strengthening their words by mighty works, and themselves shedding the

last drop of their blood, giving up to the very last, every effort of their strength, in defence and maintenance of the standard of truth and charity which they established. A real saint is the most magnanimous of men ; he gives himself for his fellow man. He is a standard of holiness, for he has learned and studied under the great divine model ; his life is a lesson of love, for love of God inaugurated his work, and affection for his neighbor is its secondary moving power. The saints are truly great, for they have been truly good. They point by the actions of their lives to a better land, whither we must tend, as the ultimate object of our wanderings in our exile here below.

Such is the true idea of the saint, such the picture furnished in his after years by the child which divine Providence gave the world in the person of La Salle.\* \* \* \* (1)

Holy Writ informs us that "a wise son maketh the father glad, but the foolish son is the sorrow of his mother." Taking this as the measure of the blessing bestowed upon the parents of the child John Baptist De La Salle, they were blessed indeed. Their conduct in his education was such as to deserve all the happiness that such a son can bestow.

On his birth day John Baptist was regenerated in the waters of baptism. It was near his cradle that Mdme. De La Salle loved to pray. While still a babe, and suffering as children are wont, the Christian mother gave her first-born the crucifix to kiss, and long before the little one had learned the meaning, he had felt the soothing power of the sign of our redemption.

The pious mother had read and learned what Sts. Jerome and Augustine tell us of the passion as developed in earliest years. She knew that it was her duty as a Christian mother to

---

(1) A few years ago, a literary society was founded in Rheims. Among the subjects of discussion given, was "The old houses of our city." In examining the documents referring to these, the house in which the Ven. De La Salle was born was thus discovered. It is now the property of the Institute, and was re-opened on the 200th anniversary of the day on which D. L. S. took the teachers into his own dwelling. (AUTHOR.)



begin from the most tender years to train the child in the way of the cross. Divine Providence afforded little De La Salle a fair share of the cup of suffering, for from his birth he was delicate and frail. If the sign of our redemption was the first shown to the child, the name of the Divine Redeemer was also the first that he was taught to pronounce. Long before any effort was made to teach him the names of those to whom after God, he owed his being, he was made to pronounce that name "whose sweetness equals its power," without which all food is dry and insipid ; a name which is exquisite honey in the mouth, sweet melody to the ear, jubilation to the heart," the Holy name of Jesus. With the pious author of the hymn on the sacred name of Mary we may say :

" He spoke it and he smiled. "

"As soon," says the biographer of De La Salle's youth, "as reason dawned, and that the child could walk with ease, the pious mother led him to the church." "At once," writes his first biographer, "his heart was charmed." His eyes were drawn to the contemplation of the altar and its flowers and ornaments, the rising incense, the priests in prayer, surrounded by their assistants ; and while his senses were thus wrapt in the externals of religion, his soul felt an undefined yet genuine impulse leading him to learn that God alone is truly good ; that religion alone can charm the mind while ennobling the heart. Young De La Salle went home after his first visit to the church firmly convinced that he had been in the divine presence, actually residing in God's holy temple ; he felt that the great God had listened, and that he, a little child, had been allowed to hold converse with Him.

After his return home, his only subject of conversation was the sights he had beheld. Like all intelligent children, he had a thousand *whys* to propose. If ordinary children are so attrac-

tive in their infantile talk about the usual topics of the child-world, what, asks one of his biographers, must have been the interest felt in young La Salle who babbled the sweet names of Jesus and Mary, asked such strange questions about their prerogatives, and thus, like the Divine Child in the Temple, asked and answered questions which astonished his hearers !

Young La Salle naturally concluded that no one should know these sacred things so well or so fully as the priest. As many of the reverend clergy frequented his father's house, he seemed supremely happy and at ease. When he perceived them at a distance he hastened to meet them, and ere their arrival at the parental home, he had secured their good graces, asked many questions and received as many answers. Naturally anxious to encourage such excellent dispositions, the good clergy not only answered his queries, but, by an intelligent direction, gave his thoughts a deeper and more practical bearing. When they spoke, he listened with attention ; he then renewed his questions, and only ceased his interrogatories when he felt that others were likewise entitled to the company and conversation of his father's visitors.

It was after such visits to the church and such conversations with the ministers of holy Mother Church that young De La Salle was accustomed to retire to his room where, with the greatest gravity and truly juvenile piety, he repeated such ceremonies of the Church as he could well remember ; the flowers he gathered, he used to decorate his miniature altar, while candlesticks and other ornaments were made to do duty in the young saint's oratory. While thus describing John Baptist De La Salle, it must not be imagined that he was either taciturn or morose. On the contrary, he was the gayest among his lively companions : loved to be in the midst of interesting but innocent games. " Even in his old age," relates one of his biographers " his delight was to see children busy at play : he enjoyed their shouts of laughter and

declared that where there was plenty of noise there were few sins." Youth, when worthy of its years, loves freshness and openness of heart and soul ; generosity of sentiment, valor in juvenile struggles, sweet gayety, kindly manners, pure emotions are all the portion of the truly Christian youth : such were the traits which all admired in young De La Salle. In this way did he acquire, even as a boy, that wonderful influence over youth, for which, in all his after years he was so distinguished.

And all this happy combination of traits and virtues which, in others could be but the result of prolonged years of struggle, De La Salle possessed while yet under seven years old ! Many reasons might be given for such rare indications at so early an age, but, we may perhaps say that it was his wonderful devotion to the Saints and his persistent study of their lives which brought about such early fruits. Even before he had learned to read, the Saints' lives were his daily, not to say hourly food. Among his relatives and acquaintances, it was well known that the shortest way to reach his good will and affection was by reading to him some of the lives of those saints whose narrative proved most attractive. Even in his early days, the future character was seen ; the future mission indicated. Young La Salle loved such lives as had been filled with deeds of good to men ; lives lived for the benefit of humanity ; lives given up that souls might be saved. And thus, as Père Gaven tells us, the child John Baptist De La Salle already shone as the most brilliant gem in a truly illustrious family ; in his beauty of soul was seen the ingrowing of Christ's own exceeding lustre ; here indeed was a soul not only bought but kept pure and unstained by the merits of the blood of a Redeemer and Saviour. To preserve this young soul thus untarnished, to present it daily as a pure holocaust before the Lord, became thenceforth the reigning thought, the sole ambition of John Baptist's parents.

But, the mother, as biographers relate, took the largest share



in this holy work. Her's was a piety whose perfume filled the whole house. Under such influences, John Baptist grew up inhaling a blessed atmosphere as he waxed stronger. Thus the young mother, though so mild and gentle, exercised a wonderful influence by the wisdom of her words, the energy of her acts, and vivifying principle of piety gave to both acts and words a meaning and a power which they could not otherwise possess. "This pious mother," as the most ancient of De La Salle's biographers relates, "strove in retirement and silence to cultivate those virtues which dread the gaze of men in the glare of society, from which they rarely escape unscathed.

In this labor of love, in which she sought to reproduce Christ in the person of her heaven-blessed son, she never failed to avail herself of the assistance to be obtained by praying to, and the influence to be exercised by, the mother of all Christian children, Christ's own Immaculate Mother, Mary. Often, while praying beside her son's cradle, or later, when showing him the image of heaven's Queen, she would place her rosary in young De La Salle's hands. Thus under the benign influence of prayer, example and his own good disposition, John Baptist grew to be a boy of seven years. He had already made a chapel of his own little room; his ambition was soon to be satisfied, when he would be allowed to enter the sanctuary as an altar-boy, there to perform angelic functions which had already been the delight of such holy personages as St. Louis of France, a King of Bohemia, Louis of Gonzaga, and many others whose examples he sought to imitate, whose lives he strove to reproduce, so far as the good God would permit it, in his own.

For a whole year, John Baptist had been studying the responses, watching his more favored companions already in service, and asking such questions as would enable him best to fulfil such holy functions. When, finally, he was allowed to enter the holy place, to act the part of altar boy to the ministers of

the Most High, he appeared rather an angel than a child ; he was pointed out as the exemplar of the sanctuary, the child who was to realize great things, since God was so visibly with him, guiding his actions, inspiring his thoughts, and giving a heavenly caste to his whole exterior. “ When at the altar, he was seized with a holy fear which communicated itself to the assistants. On beholding him, people were inclined to call him a seraph in the flesh ; his whole exterior bespoke a lively faith, an ardent love for Christ Jesus.” His countenance inflamed, even in his early years, with love divine, moved all hearts. Though yet so simple and comparatively untaught, he went about the altar with genial grace and with a serious cast of countenance that bespoke faith, fear and love, and which at once proclaimed him destined for the service of the altar. His responses at Holy Mass were at once clear, energetic, and yet mellowed by the holiest of convictions. But, his piety was not content with the important duties incumbent upon the true altar-boy. His devotion asked for more, and he might be seen in his spare moments, kneeling at the feet of Mary’s favored statue. He was drawn to this good Mother through the love he bore her divine Son, and all through life, his greatest pleasure was to prostrate himself at her feet ; his greatest trial to withdraw from the lovely and childlike conversations which he held with the Mother of Purity, the Protectress of the weak and lowly.

We have thus far seen young De La Salle amid his own friends and parents, showing by his conduct what the future man was to be ; let us now follow him outside the paternal mansion, to the University of Rheims, where his virtue will be put to the test, his talents fairly measured by comparison, his worth proven by the keen test of exposure. In all these cases he will prove worthy of his earliest promises.



## CHAPTER II.

*Influence of Early Training.—The private tutor ; public Christian Schools.—Benefits of Emulation.—Young La Salle enters the University of Rheims.—Professor and Pupil.—Mutual relations.—Home amusements.—John Baptist loves only Sacred Music.—Fails to learn profane airs.—Vocation.—M. De La Salle and wife consent, after a struggle.—Appeal to Christian Parents.—Result of one vocation followed.—John Baptist receives the tonsure.—How he preserves his virginal purity.—Penances and other means employed.—He is named Canon at 16.—Impression made by the young Cleric.—La Salle goes to Paris.—Death of father and mother.—Return to Rheims.—Trials and Temptations.—Important lesson given.—Victory !*

“ If we have had so many bad princes and rulers, ” wrote the late illustrious Mgr. Dupanloup, bishop of Orleans, “ we owe it to their isolated education.” Kept apart from the world whose welfare they were bound to study and understand, these chiefs of the people came to look upon themselves as a superior class of beings and acted accordingly. Had they, on the contrary, been brought up in any of those renowned public schools which the Church has established, or which the State encouraged, they would have learned their own and others’ worth by the practical test of experience. And what is true of princes, equally applies to the sons of wealthy parents at the time of which we write.

Monsieur De La Salle knew human nature too well to be ignorant of the countless blessings which arise from healthy rivalry between youths of the same age and equal capacity. He was anxious that his son’s manhood should be gradually but surely de-

veloped by daily contact and competition with juvenile companions. While fully aware of the dangers which threaten the student who attends largely frequented schools, he was convinced that the advantages far exceed the dangers; and therefore resolved that his son John Baptist should follow the courses pursued in the University of Rheims, where he accordingly entered, as a day-scholar. Moreover, the fond parent was persuaded from evidences already furnished, that his son would, God helping, be able to resist and even forestall the dangers to which he would be exposed. Nor was he mistaken. The University was at that time under the Presidency of Rev. M. Dozet, a relative of the La Salles and likewise a Canon of the Metropolitan Church of Rheims. Thus guided, under the eye of a watchful relative, John Baptist soon became a favorite with all his professors, who, already, as related by Père Blain, began to ask themselves: "What think you shall this child be? for the Lord is surely with him!"

To his new professors he appeared in the same light as he had formerly done to his parents and relatives: "frank and sincere in word, in conduct; neither disguise nor evasion; wonderfully given to obedience, while manifesting the utmost firmness of character in carrying out the orders he received: in disposition, mild and affable, gay and vivacious. An angel in prayer, of whom it was hard to say whether he was more amiable than pious,—a question which has never been settled by any of his biographers, for we may easily conceive that he excelled in both, since he copied each from the same divine model.

It was by such conduct that he became "a model of virtue to his fellow-students, and a subject of pride to his masters. The precocious talents of the young scholar, his keenness of judgment and close attention to study, gave his parents reason to expect a most brilliant future for their son. . . . Greater than they had ever dared to hope was to be his repute, yet, in the designs

of God, this distinction was to be attained in a sphere far different from what his parents, but especially his father, had anticipated. A partial revelation of John Baptist's future course was shown in the manner in which he acted when urged by his worthy father to study profane music. The La Salle mansion was known among the gentry of Rheims as being among the most generous encouragers of arts and artists. Their parlors were the scene of many brilliant musical entertainments, and M. De La Salle did not consider it beneath his dignity as a magistrate, to take a large personal share in contributing to the pleasure of his visitors. Among the many accomplishments which he desired his son to acquire, he particularly wished him to become a good musician. He had reason to think that his little son had more than ordinary talent, for, from his infancy he had taken pleasure in humming church tunes and hymns. But, the good father had failed to perceive that his son's taste scrupulously avoided committing to memory any of the many short airs of a secular character which were so often sung and played at home. Thus when the proposal was made that young De La Salle should learn music, he at once complied with his father's wishes, and strove to gratify his desire. But, Providence wished otherwise, and despite all his self-control it soon became evident that John Baptist's taste was limited to strictly religious music. This was, as we have said, a forecast of the higher vocation to which he was called.

In the course which M. De La Salle wished his son to pursue, the youth soon perceived that while religion was in honor, she was not to have the first place. What was he to do? Obedience required him to comply, and yet an inner voice told him that he was not to be of this world. His latest biographer, Rev. Père Gaveau, beautifully says: "What shall the future Founder do? Who will solve his difficulties? Though but a very young student, he has acquired a habit already old in his case.

He will place the matter in the hands of her whose Son called him to his service. He will ask her to smooth the path, to fill up the valley of difficulties, with the inflowing of her choicest graces, and his prayer will be heard. The hour comes when the good father makes known his wishes ; then, in words which he speaks from the fullness of a truly filial heart, young John Baptist gives his father to understand that such hopes may not be cherished. Parents are often pained that God may be pleased. He feels himself called to serve God alone ; to minister at the altar of sacrifice ; he asks to be allowed to follow his vocation, which, as both Père Gaveau and Brother Lucard tell us, he received at the moment of his first communion. "To know God's will and to act accordingly" was ever young De La Salle's practice. In this circumstance his child-like eloquence won his cause. M. De La Salle renounced all worldly prospects for his son, while the latter hastened to thank God for giving so easy a solution to a question which had threatened to be serious in its consequences. Christian parents, do you understand the nobility of such conduct? Do you see your own duty traced in the action of this Christian father? If urged, even at the risk of your lives, to break open the door of the tabernacle, to seize the sacred vessels, and to use them for profane purposes, the blood-stained altar-steps would attest the courage with which you had resisted so sacrilegious an outrage. Yet, what less criminal act do you commit, when you thwart the religious vocations of your children ; when you take these vessels of election, and constrain them to serve a purpose for which Providence had never intended them? Had such unchristian principles directed the conduct of Louis de La Salle, we should not have one of the brightest pages furnished for our information and encouragement in the extensive volume of Catholic history, while the Church, and, through her, society, might have had fewer laborers in the great cause of popular education.



In the conduct of John Baptist, at this early age, we see that his retiring disposition did not indicate want of force of character. It was his first great sacrifice, and his Christian fortitude proved equal to the exigency. True courage is never demonstrative. Like still waters which run deep, it is only the occasion which brings forth the expression of its power.

The first step which young La Salle took towards embracing the ecclesiastical state, to which he and his parents had now decided he should devote himself, was the reception of the tonsure. This he received on the eleventh of March, 1662. This was not an idle ceremony, nor simply a seeming renunciation of worldly manners and customs. . . . Young La Salle's tongue only spoke what his heart felt when he declared that he took God for his portion, and that he desired no other inheritance. Once a cleric, John Baptist, already so good, seems yet an entirely new man. His piety, his modesty, the innocence of his morals, all shone with greater lustre than before he had vested himself with the cleric's surplice and had approached the steps of the altar. Among the young aspirants to holy orders, clerics like himself, he was a shining light. As beautifully said by his oldest biographer, La Salle was a candle that the bishop had lighted and had placed upon a candlestick, that it might spread its rays upon the church of Rheims. Soon this light would shine over all France. His love for chanting the praises of the Lord increased each day. Providence was preparing his young servant to follow him still more closely.

La Salle's hair had fallen under the blessed scissors, while he was robed in the white surplice. Thus sacrifice was joined to the reception of that garment so significant of holiness of life and purity of purpose.

From that moment, likewise, "he devoted himself with redoubled energy to his studies. His application increased the results to be expected from his talents, and a keen intelligence join-



ed with good sense and extraordinary industry, made him a student of whom all had reason to be proud. Documents still preserved tell that in a few years he became one of the most distinguished students in the University. His affability of manner never abandoned him for a moment, and those whom he surpassed in study were the first to congratulate their more fortunate competitor."

John Baptist was now at an age when the treasure of innocence can only be preserved at the price of sacrifice. Hence he became extremely watchful over the movements of his own heart; he never allowed his temper to overcome his usual serenity, and his victory over himself was complete because he never made sacrifices by halves. This struggle against his nascent passions was a success, because in this battle with self, he called upon God in prayer, in words dictated by humility. When he found that vigilance, prayer and struggle were to be but a part of his duty, when holy purity was to be preserved, he never hesitated a moment to join to these such other means as religion suggests, and our Divine Lord himself has declared to be necessary. Hence, even at this early age, he employed those severe measures against his own body which we admire in the Saints. Cruel scourgings kept his flesh in subjection, while he declared that "the only safeguards against the pitfalls of sensuality are the salutary thorns of penance and mortification."

In this way his whole life was made to feel the influence of an angelic existence: he manifested a precocity of manliness, a mild firmness, a generosity of sentiment, an elevation of soul, which announced his future greatness.

This constant attachment to the holy virtue and his success in preserving it, he attributed to the Most Blessed Virgin, to whom he was remarkably devoted. "So fully did he participate in the characteristic virtue of the angels, that he in some sort presented in his person a résumé of their charms. His purity of body gave

untold brilliancy to his mind, enabling him to seize upon and to appreciate the nicest distinctions in disputed points, the choicest thoughts in literary gems, the pivotal points in historical studies . . . . Thus gifted, he was prepared to admire great men ; he was moreover ready and qualified to take his place among those to whom the Christian world by which he was surrounded looked up for spiritual guidance. ”

At this time the University of Rheims had for chancellor, Pierre Dozet, archdeacon of Champagne. . . . He was a man of great information and of profound piety. He had, by personal observation and the report of the professors, learned the worth of young De La Salle. . . Finding that death was likely to surprise him at any moment, the venerable chancellor, who had been over fifty years canon, resolved to put the youth in his place. This thought consoled him, and he made it known to the youth’s parents. John Baptist was the least flattered by the offer, but through obedience he accepted. He took possession of his stall on the 17th of January, 1767, being but sixteen years old. . . . “ Remember,” said M. Dozet to his young friend, “ that a canon should live like a Carthusian monk ; he must pass his life in solitude and in retreat. . . ” Young De La Salle never forgot this advice.

For three years he continued his studies at the University of Rheims, where he finally graduated. During this period “ his assiduity at choir was remarkable : yet the devotion with which he sang the Divine Office attracted even greater attention. The aged members of the Chapter considered themselves happy in having the young canon in their midst : the more youthful respected his virtues, for had they been inclined to irregularity, his example would have condemned their conduct.

In 1670, being nineteen years old, De La Salle went to Paris to pursue his theological studies under the best masters. These he found in the Seminary of St. Sulpice, where he remained

till called home by the death of father and mother, within a short lapse of time.

In leaving his holy retreat where study and prayer had so fully occupied his time, he deserved to have the following testimonial entered opposite his name in the Seminary register: John Baptist De La Salle was an exact observer of the rules, being most assiduous at all the community exercises. He daily grew in retirement from the world. His conversation was humble and affable. He seems never to have pained anybody, or to have been reproached on any point." Such testimony is worth much from an institution which "makes saints, but rarely speaks of them as such." It is the characteristic of well governed ecclesiastical houses that good is done in a quiet way. It is in those mysterious retreats, far from the bustle and noise of the world that the future soldiers of Christ prepare themselves by prayer and other holy exercises for the struggles of future battle-fields. The Seminary and the Novitiate do a like work. Under the guidance of wise and holy directors, the cleric or novice is taught to look into and sound the depths of his own heart, and in thus studying himself, the future priest or teacher learns to know the entire world. Enlightened by the divine light received in prayer, they learn to know and understand the things of God. They learn to value souls at their true price and to sacrifice themselves unceasingly in their behalf. . . .

A period of such training in the best seminary then in France, had already been given De La Salle, when the duties of home, where he was to act the part of father and mother to six younger brothers and sisters, called him from his holy retreat. At this point came the strongest temptation of his life, one that was to decide whether he was to take up his cross and follow Christ, or whether, loving brother and sister more than Christ, he was to prove unfit for the kingdom of heaven.

In dying, M. De La Salle had confided his children to the care of John Baptist. He could not refuse this legacy of love and confidence. The young canon prayed much, asked advice and finally accepted the task with all its heavy responsibilities. He was in his twenty-first year, and was required to show, in his person, such a combination of qualities as would enable him fittingly to replace two such worthy parents as Mons. and Mme. De La Salle. Scarcely had he undertaken the difficult duty when the trial of his life was upon him. He, for the first time experienced a really violent temptation against his ecclesiastical vocation. There was much in the surroundings of his position to give color to his disturbance of mind. Thus far, he had only received minor orders and was not irrevocably fixed in the service of God. Moreover, did not the death of father and mother justify his looking back? Did not circumstances require him to remain in the world? Were not his brothers' and sisters' fortunes in his keeping? How could he reconcile the administration of a large fortune with those duties which would be incumbent upon him, if he pursued his ecclesiastical career? Might he not secure his salvation in the world? Did not duty call upon him to forego his personal inclination towards a more perfect state that he might give himself up to the task of educating and protecting the young family by which he was surrounded?

Young reader! Here is a lesson which you should carry with you all through life. In such circumstances, where nature pleads so eloquently, where the world comes in with its subtle arguments, be not your own guide. Follow the example of De La Salle. Go, cast yourself at the feet of Christ's minister, and listen to his words. As he did, ask Mary to protect you.

God, in his infinite goodness had provided the proper guide to lead De La Salle out of the wilderness of his own thoughts into the calm and peace which are the reward of obedience. In the



person of Rev. F. Roland, our hero found one of those sympathetic yet great souls made to lead others to the highest peaks of the mountain of religious perfection. To him De La Salle made known the secret thoughts which strove to obtain the mastery. He pleaded not in favor of one side more than the other. His motives were most pure, his sole desire to know the divine will which, through all future years "he will adore in his



DE LA SALLE INVOKING DIVINE AID.

regard." The experienced spiritual director soon learned the value of the soul he was to save from a false step: he had no hesitancy in assuring him that God required his undivided love and service. Moreover, properly directed, and with a purified intention, the distractions inevitable in his guardianship would become a source of sanctification instead of being a cause of falling away. Such was M. Roland's opinion.

This advice which De La Salle received as an expression of



the divine will, put an end to his perplexities. While devoting himself unreservedly to the welfare of his youthful wards, he resumed his studies, and at the close of two months from the time of his final resolve to persevere in his ecclesiastical vocation, he took the irrevocable obligations of the state upon himself by receiving sub-deaconship on the eve of Trinity Sunday, 1672. The habits of order and discipline which were always familiar to him, but which had been strengthened by his sojourn at St. Sulpice, taught him the value of such a systematic mode of life at home. Accordingly, he gave his brothers and sisters a regulation in which all the hours of the day had their allotted duties or privileges.

Thus the Venerable spent six years in the quiet pursuit of his duty to his relatives and of the studies which were to prepare him for the priesthood. In 1677 he received deaconship, after which he spent a year in preparing for the dread ceremony which was to make him a priest forever. It was after having spent the Holy Week of 1678 in contemplating the mysteries of the great sacrifice, that he presented himself on Holy Saturday to receive those sacred powers that would enable him also to renew the unbloody sacrifice, to be one among the many who would from the rising of the sun till the setting of the same give glory to God on high, and by his ministrations tend to preserve peace among men of good will.

During these six long years of preparation, M. De La Salle had been under the constant direction of Rev. M. Roland. This worthy priest's work was accomplished. He had led La Salle into the temple, and placed him at the altar; moreover he had founded an Institute of nuns for the instruction of the poor and had greatly interested his penitent in their welfare. He is now called away. Eighteen days after his ordination John B. De La Salle closed M. Roland's eyes in death. Their last glance of gratitude was given when the future founder of the Brothers

of the Christian Schools promised that he would be a father to the orphaned Daughters of the Holy Child Jesus. Such was the name of M. Roland's Institute.

Do you not perceive the wonderful ways of Divine Providence in all this? Quietly, the mission is being prepared ; gradually the task unfolds itself ; without noise or bustle, the ground is being broken. De La Salle is protecting the Daughters of the Holy Child Jesus. In supporting them in their first trials ; in overcoming the opposition of the public against the new Society, he is exercising himself in the very class of work to which, on a much larger scale, he will soon give himself up entirely. He is in the hands of an infinitely wise Providence. He is borne in its arms ; acts under its impulse. The protector of the Daughters of the Holy Child Jesus, devoted to the welfare of poor girls, will soon appear, with his own banner afloat. He will be the founder of an Order, "one of the greatest factors in the Church," whose mission it will be to call little children together and teach them the fear of the Lord. Of this, in our next chapter.



### CHAPTER III.

*"Each one has a work to do, a mission to fulfil."—La Salle labors in another's field.—Use made of his influence.—What the Church has done for you'th.—At work wherever a monastery is built or a Church erected.—A few schools mentioned.—What was taught.—Lack of method in schools of France at the time La Salle began his work.—His method developed.—Opposition.—Famine.—"Providence the only basis upon which to build Christian Schools."—M. De La Salle educates his disciples.—His "Meditations on School."—Résumé of principal headings of Chapters.—Schools for higher classes also opened.—How children should be treated.—Absence of corporal punishment.—Object lessons.—The School of Discipline.—Plan of St. Yon.—Where the Venerable lived.—Foreign Countries.—An event in Madagascar.*

John Baptist De La Salle has reached that age and position in which Providence indicates the work to be done, and in a calm quiet way, prepares the plan on which this work is to be done ; allowing such circumstances to occur as will manifest the design and facilitate the first steps toward its realization.

After the death of Père Roland, De La Salle faithfully kept the sacred trust given him by the dying priest who had said : "I confide to you also my newly established congregation of the Sisters of the Child Jesus : this is the noblest inheritance you will receive from my profound friendship. Your zeal will cause it to prosper. Through love for the souls of poor children purchased with the blood of Jesus Christ, you will complete the work I have begun." No sooner had the worthy priest breathed his last than M. De La Salle took charge of the young Community . . . . This struggling society which M. Roland had so dearly loved,

which he had sustained with all his influence. . . . would have fallen shortly after him, had not their faithful friend come to their assistance. He procured them *letters patent*, had them recognized as of public utility by the City Council, and ceased not to labor in their behalf till the Daughters of the Child Jesus were solidly established, when they justly considered their new protector a second Founder. So much interest in their welfare naturally required many visits to the Convent. One day as he approached the convent he was met by two travellers careworn and fatigued : one was of mature years, the other young, apparently the elder's servant. In them, without knowing it, La Salle was greeting the first laborers in a vineyard over which he was soon to preside. Let us take a short glance, and see what had been done previously for the education of the poor ; what the state of education among the poor was, at the time of which we write.

“Primary education begins with the Church. Christ was himself a teacher of the very elements of divine truth which He came to make known to men : his Apostles were the earliest Christian educators. The Church and the School have always been inseparable for the people. As time rolled on, and revolution followed revolution, the Church clung to her divine mission to “go and teach !” Even when success crowned her efforts, and princes encouraged her labors, she forgot not her calling. Her sons went forth, formed colonies, and exchanged the comforts of an established home for the miasma of the marsh and the terrors of the forest.”

“The pagan world had paid but little if any attention to the instruction of the masses. The Church, on the other hand, had devoted herself unreservedly to the task for sixteen centuries : her councils obliged to this by the force of their laws ; Chapters of different churches looked upon it as a first duty, their treasures were poured out unstintingly in this noble cause : wherever the Church arose there were found men laboring for



the betterment of mankind, through the elevation of the standard of intelligence among youth.

“In her Alexandrian Schools, the Christian system absorbed every branch of learning. The Roman Schools were on a humbler scale, but those who desire to know what they were like, at least in external form, may satisfy their curiosity by a visit to the catacombs of St. Agnes, where several chambers may still be seen, with a seat and benches . . . which were intended for the master and his hearers.”

From Rome, pass over to Ireland. There the schools preserved the whole world from falling into barbarism. “Columba was the first to lead the way in whatever labors the monks engaged.”. . . . He himself was a skilful penman . . . . and Iona came to be looked upon as the chief seat of learning, not only in Britain, but in the whole Western world. Thither, as from a nest, these sacred doves took their flight to every quarter. They studied the classics, the mechanical arts, law, history and physic. They improved the arts of husbandry, . . . . supplied the rude people, whom they had undertaken to civilize, with ploughshares and other utensils of labor, and taught them the use of the forge, in the mysteries of which, every Irish monk was instructed from his boyhood.

“The probability is,” says the author of “*Christian Schools and Scholars*,” that Charlemagne established both a School and an Academy, and that the two institutions, though not identical, were directed by the same masters. . . The *Academy* was formed of the friends and courtiers of Charlemagne, while the *School* was for the education of youths . . . . chosen from all ranks, noble and simple.”. . . . “Fail not to cultivate learning,” said the Emperor Charlemagne, “with the humble intention of pleasing God. . . We wish to see you what soldiers of Christ ought to be—devout in life, learned in intercourse with the world, chaste in action, and scholars in conversation—so that all who

approach you may be as much enlightened by your wisdom as they are edified by your holy life." In 789, an edict was published, requiring elementary schools to be attached to all monasteries and Catholic churches, *without exception*, and that children of all ranks, both noble and servile should be received therein. The more important monasteries were to open High Schools, in which mathematics, astronomy, arithmetic, geometry, music and rhetoric would be taught."

Passing from the Kingdom of Charlemagne to the realms of "Good King Alfred" of England, we find the Church equally solicitous. The history of this prince, and his noble efforts in the cause of learning, are so familiar to all readers that it may seem unnecessary to say much of the *restoration of letters* which took place during his reign. Alfred was told of Grimbald who was renowned for his knowledge of the Scriptures and his proficiency in musical science, and for this purpose he dispatched an embassy to the Archbishop of Rheims begging that the learned monk might be sent to him without delay. . . . Grimbald arrived in England in 884, and began to teach. . . . in the schools opened by Alfred at Oxford. . . . A small number of French monks were placed by Alfred in the monastery newly erected in the Isle of Athelney. . . . The direction of the Court School was given to Asser, a monk whose fame had reached Alfred from afar. . . . Not only princes, and the sons of the nobility, but many also of humble rank, received their education in these literary nestlings.

*"If we put together the different classes of schools enumerated, it will, I think, appear that in the 15th Century, England was as well provided with the means of education, for rich and poor, as she is at the present day."* (1)

---

(1) "CHRISTIAN SCHOOLS AND SCHOLARS," We cannot suggest any more instructive reading, any that will show how faithfully the Church, in keeping with the means at her disposal, cared for and instructed the people. It is a complete, exhaustive answer to the many trivial scribblers who talk about the Church loving ignorance, and fearing the light; these forget that it is to the Church, and to her alone, we owe the preservation of letters and sciences.

And thus the Church has accomplished her mission in every part of the world—whenever and wherever she was at liberty to do good, her first attention was devoted to the children. So prospered affairs till the dark cloud of the Reformation came to break up long established monastic schools, and to scatter the teachers. We do not propose to enter into details here, suffice it to say, that wherever the Church was dethroned, the rights of the poor were forgotten. In no countries in the world were the people so much neglected as in those where they had been induced to give up the old faith, and with this faith, all the privileges it claimed for the poor. Moreover, the education most of the poor could obtain, previous to the invention of printing, was very limited. Guttenberg's invention of the types, and Columbus' discovery of America, both Catholic achievements, opened a new field for the lower classes. It was the mission of the Venerable De La Salle to supply this want first for France, after which he would furnish a large portion of teachers to the entire world.

When the Venerable undertook to form his first disciples, primary education was at a low ebb in his native country. Before studying their own language, French boys were obliged to learn how to read Latin. However strange this may appear, it was universally the case. Thus, years were spent in acquiring the mere ability to read a language they never understood. This the Venerable changed, though in doing so, he was opposed by all past experience, and by many even of his chief helpers and friends. But, De La Salle had an educational genius : in this as in so many other things, he quietly pursued his course, allowing the world to talk. Later, he published his reasons, through respect for an eminent Bishop who opposed the change, and required the Venerable to explain his motives for what was termed an innovation. This the humble servant of God did with such clearness, as fully to convince the most sceptical of the wisdom which guided him in his new methods.

Again, previous to his time the individual method of teaching was almost universally pursued, or where this was not the case, large numbers of children were gathered into one large room, where they were separately taught, each pupil going to the teacher in turn, while the balance either remained in absolute idleness, or if the master had not sufficient control, amused themselves to the great annoyance of the child who was receiving a lesson.

It will easily be seen that this plan did not produce satisfactory results, and in most cases the number of children was extremely limited. Moreover, even such schools were not numerous at that time for the poor. In some cities, despite the opposition of the Church, attendance at poor schools was considered disgraceful, and so far was this spirit carried, that in the City of Rouen, poor scholars were obliged to announce the fact by bearing a band about their caps with the name *poor scholar* written or printed upon it. The Venerable was to change all this. Under his gentle sway, the poor were to be the favorites. As beautifully expressed in his Rule, he required that "the Brothers should have an equal affection for all their pupils, but especially for the poor."

But, it was in his methods that he proved himself the child's greatest friend. Instead of the awkward school-room previously described, where one child was heard at a time, De La Salle first received all who presented themselves, in the schools which he established in various parts of France. He then examined each pupil carefully, and had him placed in a separate classroom under a competent Brother. Here, the child was again examined, and placed in the section of that class for which he was best fitted. It is said that so great was the progress thus obtained that in a very short time, the Brothers' schools were overcrowded. The wealthy had no objection to their children associating with the poor, when they found that all were treat-



ed with equal kindness. And here, speaking of the kindness of De La Salle and his disciples, it must be said to his and their honor, that in the first regulations made, there is no question of corporal punishment, the only penances named therein being such as would make the pupils repair their faults by performing some task, committing to memory some lines that referred to the nature and danger of the fault committed. Nor was it long before such paternal treatment had its effect. Many of the best class of boys became so attached to their masters as to wish to join them by embracing their manner of life. Thus it was that the holy Founder established his Junior or Preparatory Novitiates. The same practice holds in the Institute to-day ; and if any of our young readers wish to see thirty or more of the happiest boys in the world, they need but visit the Brothers' Preparatory Novitiates of Montreal, New York, or Baltimore.

We must not, however, imagine that all this good was accomplished without trouble. Scarcely had the first successes been achieved when the writing masters attacked De La Salle and his Brothers as being illegally employed in teaching. So far did they go in their opposition, that they drove the Brothers from their schools in Paris, and threw the furniture into the street. Patiently were these and similar attacks borne up against, till better days shone, and the classes were re-opened. Perhaps, when we come to learn the character of the work done by these writing masters, we will partly excuse, or at least understand their opposition. As their name indicates, the writing masters taught some few the art of penmanship for a stipulated sum—of course, this debarred the poor from learning. Moreover, all who were ignorant of writing, and these were extremely numerous, employed the masters to do all their correspondence, etc. When De La Salle undertook to teach every child to do what had been almost a close secret, we can well understand the dis-

may of those who for years had charged what they pleased, and had looked upon their business as almost an inalienable right. Within twenty years after the establishment of the Brothers' schools in any city, the writing masters found their occupation gone.

Five years had thus elapsed : the schools were a success, the Brothers seemingly happy, when an unexpected and trying occasion presented itself. Here is how the matter is described in the *Life and Work of the Venerable De La Salle*.

“The year 1684 may justly be termed the sad year in the history of France. Several seasons of insufficient crops had rendered provisions as scarce as they were dear. From all the surrounding villages, hundreds of poor persons crowded into the cities, and Rheims had the appearance of a vast pauper-house. Most of the middle and lower classes were reduced to beggary, as all work had ceased. Even many rich people were brought to the utmost state of misery. Religious communities, to whom want had hitherto been unknown, were forced to part with their most costly furniture, in exchange for bread. So afflicting a year was one in which the Abbé De La Salle could part with his goods, without going far to find ready receivers. He was now to remove a difficulty he had shortly before written about. ‘My mouth,’ he said ‘is closed : I have no right to speak the language of perfection to my teachers ; nor can I tell them of poverty while I am possessed of a rich patrimony, which precludes the possibility of want. How can I speak to them of abandonment to Providence, while I am provided against indigence ?’ ‘No other reliance than Providence is suited to the Christian schools,’ De La Salle had been told, by those whom he consulted. He determined to act on the suggestion. Accordingly, he divided his fortune into four parts : the first purchased food for his poor scholars, and assisted the Sisters of the Child Jesus : the second was given to the outside poor, who were first

taught catechism for a few moments before each distribution ; the third part was given to females in distress, the fourth was distributed among the bashful poor. Every effort was made to find these deserving persons without being discovered by them. His former enemies who had been most bitter in their assaults were the chief objects of his liberality." But, when they saw their beloved father and founder reduced to a state of poverty like themselves, these timorous teachers became more confident, for the Venerable's instructions now fell upon hearts that had been moved by the power of example to follow their master in all things." The same author, speaking of the state of the Institute at the time of which we write, quotes from Montalembert who says in his *Monks of the West* : "No monastic institution has ever failed which had for its corner stone faith, poverty for its walls, and modesty for its roof." These were the three virtues in which the Abbé De La Salle centred his hopes. They were therefore built upon the foundations against which the waters and winds beat without avail. His whole career and that of his disciples was inspired by the first of these great virtues ; poverty was seen in everything connected with his foundations, while modesty in word and work was so conspicuous as to make the new religious a spectacle to angels and men.

Not content with having become as poor, or even poorer than his children, De La Salle gave repeated evidence that the master did not consider himself greater than the disciple ; his every act proved that on the contrary he looked upon himself as one destined to labor as the servant of all. Whenever a Brother fell ill, he hastened to replace him in the class room, where, as has been so lovingly dilated upon by all his biographers, he was distinguished from all his disciples by the gentle gravity of his looks and words, the charity of his proceedings, the zeal which shone forth as characteristic of his every movement. When he returned from such hours of his labor of love, his disciples

eagerly gathered about and questioned him on the results of his efforts. He took special delight in detailing all his little plans for success to the younger Brothers, to whom he was strongly attached. For these he would enter into details, repeat explanations and devise plans such as could only proceed from the mind of an educational genius, filled with the love of God and its sister virtue, affection for his neighbor, especially of that part nearest and dearest to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, the portion which he came chiefly to protect, and which he declared to be the model upon which all must form themselves, to be of the kingdom of heaven. De La Salle in thought word and deed was the special friend of childhood, such his whole life demonstrates !

Thus, though he had unlimited confidence in his Brothers, in their virtue which he had seen tried by so many serious difficulties, yet he was not satisfied till he had made the cause of the children doubly certain. His Institute was solely and entirely founded for the benefit of youth, especially of the poor. Not content then, with giving his Brothers the ordinary vows of poverty, chastity and obedience as practised by other Institutes, he desired to secure the services of his disciples for life, and thus he added the vows of teaching gratuitously and this for a life-time, by the super-added vow of stability. And in this his views agreed perfectly with those afterwards expressed by the Holy Father in his Bull of Approbation, where he shows his exalted idea of the vocation of the Brothers of the Christian Schools, decreeing that no Brother shall leave the Order, even for the purpose of entering a more rigorous Institute, an exception made for very few religious bodies in the Church. His Holiness, with all his successors, including the gloriously reigning Leo XIII. wisely concluded that the education of youth is one of the most important works in which a religious can be engaged. The more fully to imbue his disciples with a most exalted idea of their vocation, he had prepared a special series



of Meditations on the Christian and religious teacher's work. In these touching pages he tells the Brother of the Christian Schools that "it is God himself who, in his Providence established the Christian Schools." He then enters into prolonged details of "the means which should be employed by those who are charged with the Christian education of youth." To encourage those who embrace so arduous a calling he assures them that "they are co-workers with Christ in saving souls," and further tells them that "those who are chosen by Providence to educate youth, act the part of guardian angels," and he proves this most beautifully in the 6th meditation of the series. As though this were not sufficient, he continues his argument by showing that "the educator's office is most necessary to the Church." While thus raising the profession of the Christian teacher to the height to which religion and justice demand that it be elevated, he likewise most eloquently urged upon his sons the essential truth that to be worthy of their sublime calling they should discharge their duties with great zeal, the motives for which devotedness he draws from the example of our Divine Lord and of his apostles, one of whom, though not among the first twelve, could say of his dispositions, "I most gladly will spend and be spent myself for your souls." Pursuing the thread of his subject, he still further teaches that the truly zealous master will warn and correct his pupils and he gives the wisest possible rules for carrying out this form of what may almost be termed fraternal correction." The holy founder next enters into details likely to inspire every Christian and religious teacher with holy awe, when he treats of the account an educator must give to God of the manner in which he acquits himself of his employment. When treating of the chief head of this accountability, we see the true idea which the Venerable had of the Brothers' work. All that relates to religion and its practices holds the foremost rank, yet

without failing to impress upon his disciples, that to be true to their calling, their classes must be genuine nurseries of secular as well as religious learning. He goes so far as to accuse him of theft who neglects his duty in teaching secular branches, since this is one of his essential duties if he wishes to keep his pupils and their parents satisfied. Neither does the Venerable fail to impress upon his sons that "those who shall have educated youth may expect a recompense even in this life." But, after having treated of this subject cursorily, he takes up the more consoling argument as to "the recompense which a faithful Brother of the Christian Schools may expect in heaven." "When the prince of pastors shall appear, you shall receive a never-fading crown of glory," upon which he proceeds to say: "Oh! what a happiness is in store for a good Brother of the Christian Schools! What shall be his feelings, when surrounded by his numerous pupils, all like himself safe in their eternal home, they will admit that through the merits of Jesus Christ, applied through their masters, they have been saved. What a combination of unalloyed rejoicing shall then be seen between master and pupils. What union, in God, between souls thus gathered in the bonds of love and gratitude! What happiness he shall experience conversing upon *the riches of his inheritance in the Saints*.

"The crown shall be proportioned to the labor sustained, the victories won, the fatigues endured. Hence all these trials may be considered as so many sources of rejoicing. Our zeal must herein find food upon which to strengthen itself against difficulties, obstacles and persecutions. After such a career, the true Brother will be able unceasingly to proclaim in a better land; *'I exceedingly abound with joy, because of all our tribulations.'*"

Perhaps, in all the literature of the Institute there will not be found a more touching page than that in which he who is so justly called the second founder of the Institute of the Brothers of the

Christian Schools, speaks of the noble work done by the master who is worthy of his calling. Not one of our young readers will be able to scan those touching lines without feeling how truly Brother Philippe understood the views of the holy Founder. He is speaking of the young child who for the first time presents himself at the door of a Christian school.

“Look at that child who enters your class for the first time ! Does he not seem to say in his own childlike way : Brother, I am hungry, will you not give me that spiritual bread which nourishes souls ? I am a poor exile, far from my native land, will you not guide me thither, and give me back once more to the bosom of father and mother ? Many and wicked enemies pursue me ; will you not give me arms with which I may defend myself ? Look at me, Brother ; see how weak I am, will you not help me to gain strength ? I am blind, also, and must ask you to restore my sight. Finally, Brother, I have thus far lost my way,—the path that leads to my heavenly home ; will you not help me to once more find the beaten road ?”

“Ah,” continues the eloquent general, “how little faith, charity and zeal he would possess who could listen unmoved to such a tale ! What a hardened heart he must have who could prove callous to such prayers ! What a traitor to God and his neighbor would that brother be who, having it in his power to take such a child, and to lead it gently by the hand like a visible guardian angel, and who, instead, would drive the imploring youth from his presence, or worse, only keep him, to lead him astray.

“All our pupils will not certainly profit by our lessons, but, the traveller who has set stakes behind him, will easily find the right road anew. Sailors may be wrecked ; but he who has learned to swim will rise to the surface, seize some object to buoy himself up with, and wait for help. Thus it is with a child instructed in his religion and who has learned how to pray. Thus it will ever be with the boy who has had the supreme hap-

piness to make a good first communion, who has learned the power of Mary Immaculate, the consolation derived from reciting her rosary, and from being vested in her holy livery of the Scapular. Our children have come to us, their parents have given them in our keeping in the firm conviction that they will be furnished with all these helps by teachers, Christian in name and in practice, Brothers in genuine affection, devotedness and self-sacrifice in behalf of youth." Tell me, young reader, is not such a mission a grand one? Could the Almighty better show His love than by inviting any of His chosen sons to pursue such a life, filled with such noble objects and ends?

It was with similar thoughts and principles that De La Salle had filled the minds and hearts of his own disciples. It was thus that for forty years he realized a work so great and extensive that, as lately asserted by one who watched the Institute at work in the Eternal City, he never realized the growth his humble work was to attain. Let us glance at the various classes of teaching he inaugurated.

Here is the summary made by the Inspector General of Education in France, who says: "The illustrious Founder of the Brothers of the Christian Schools was the pioneer of popular Education not only in France, but in all Europe. With one master-stroke, he founded Seminaries for country teachers, Normal Institutes for city masters, Boarding Schools in which everything relating to commerce, finance, military engineering, architecture and mathematics was taught . . . and in which trades could be learned . . . Finally, an Institution in which agriculture was taught as a science. In those words, the Abbé De La Salle, at a single casting brought forth from the mould, schools for the poor. Primary Normal Colleges, Superior or Higher Training Schools for specific subjects, Technical Institutions, Agricultural Colleges, in which last, the cultivation of land was studied on a scientific basis.



Training Schools were opened by the Venerable De La Salle for the Duke de Mazarin, for the pastor of the Parish of St. Hippolyte in Paris, and in the district of Rethel. The clergy in these different places bore the chief expense of these foundations. Besides, a similar Training School was opened by the Venerable for his own Brothers.

Boarding Schools were opened in several places, notably at St. Yon, near Rouen at the urgent request of wealthy parents who insisted that it was unjust to reserve such excellent teaching solely for the poor. A similar foundation was that opened for the young Irishmen who came with their parents into France after the downfall of James II. of England. Among these young men was the ancestor of Marshal McMahon. In this school the young gentlemen *completed the education needed to fill the various offices of trust for which they were destined.*

The most noted Technical School opened by De La Salle was the *Christian Academy* in Paris. No one under twenty was received. Those admitted were taught all classes of drawing, higher mathematics and several languages. This school counted over a hundred students. At the close of the lessons, Catechism was taught.

Agriculture was pursued at St. Yon, and a part of the large garden was devoted to the growth of botanical specimens.

Of a similar class to the three above named Institutions is the present Ecole St. Nicholas, divided into three courses. When called upon lately by the Austrian committee for an introduction to the best schools of science, art and agriculture, M. Ferry, Minister, told them to visit and study the Brothers' three branches of the St. Nicholas Technical School, adding "I know nothing equal to this school in Europe."

We have seen how far ahead of all Elementary schools were those of De La Salle in his time. The Institute has not degenerated. Its schools for the people are still the best in France.

Public tests have shown this for the last thirty-five years. During this time, the Brothers' Paris schools have secured nearly a thousand out of the twelve hundred and odd purses offered to deserving scholars in poor schools. The competitions have always been made by Government officials.

The results of the examination we here republish. Paris is taken as a specimen of the work done elsewhere. The same results have been achieved, the same success secured, wherever public investigation has sought to compare the work done by the Brothers with that performed by secular competitors.

Here is the official result as given by the Inspector Generals from 1848 till the closing year herein named. When we remember that seculars had more schools, fewer pupils per teacher, hence a better chance to advance the individual scholar, and as a rule, a richer class of scholars to select from, we will be the better able to appreciate the results :

PURSES OBTAINED IN THE ANNUAL CONTESTS BETWEEN THE CITY SCHOOLS OF PARIS, 1848 TILL 1871.

1848	{ Brothers : 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 . . . 9, 10 . . . 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28 . . . 30 31 . . . }	27	{ Purses.
	{ Seculars : . . . 7, 8 . . . 11 . . . }	4	
1849	{ Brothers : 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31 . . . }	31	{ Purses.
	{ Seculars : . . . }	1	
1850	{ Brothers : 1, 2, 3 . . . 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16 . . . 18, 19 . . . 21, 22 . . . 24 . . . }	24	{ Purses.
	{ Seculars : . . . 4 . . . 17 . . . 20 . . . 23 . . . 25, 26, 27 . . . 31 . . . }	8	
1851	{ Brothers : . . . 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 . . . 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15 . . . 17 . . . 20, 21 . . . 23, 24 . . . }	38	{ Purses.
	{ Seculars : 1 . . . 7 . . . 16 . . . 18, 19 . . . 22 . . . 25, 26 . . . 30 . . . 32, 33, 34 . . . 36 . . . 38 . . . 40 : 28 }	12	
1852	{ Brothers : 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15 . . . 17, 18, 19 . . . 21, 22, 23, 24, 25 . . . 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32 . . . 34, 35 . . . 37, 38 . . . }	33	{ Purses.
	{ Seculars : . . . 16 . . . 20 . . . 23 . . . 26 . . . 33 . . . 36 . . . 39, 40 : 7 }	7	
1853	{ Brothers : . . . 2 . . . 4, 5, 6, 7, 8 . . . 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15 . . . 17 . . . 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30 . . . 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38 . . . }	31	{ Purses.
	{ Seculars : 1 . . . 3 . . . 9 . . . 10 . . . 16 . . . 18 . . . 20 . . . 23, 24 . . . 26 . . . 31, 32 . . . 39, 40 : 9 }	9	
1854	{ Brothers : 1, 2, 3, 4 . . . 6, 7, 8, 9 . . . 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19 . . . 21, 22 . . . 25 . . . 27, 28, 29, 30 . . . 32, 33, 34, 35 . . . 37, 38, 39, 40 : 32 }	8	{ Purses.
	{ Seculars : . . . 5 . . . 10 . . . 14 . . . 21 . . . 23, 24 . . . 26 . . . 31 . . . 36 . . . 39, 40 : 8 }	8	
1855	{ Brothers : 1, 2, 3 . . . 5, 6, 7 . . . 9, 10, 11, 12, 13 . . . 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20 . . . 22, 23, 24, 25, 26 . . . 28 . . . 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38 . . . }	32	{ Purses.
	{ Seculars : . . . 4 . . . 8 . . . 14 . . . 21 . . . 23, 24, 25, 26 . . . 27 . . . 29 . . . 39, 40 : 8 }	8	
1856	{ Brothers : 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8 . . . 10, 11, 12 . . . 14, 15, 16, 17 . . . 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37 . . . 39, 40 : 36 }	36	{ Purses.
	{ Seculars : . . . 9 . . . 13 . . . 18 . . . 21 . . . 23, 24, 25, 26 . . . 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33 . . . 35 . . . 38, 39 . . . 40 : 4 }	4	
1857	{ Brothers : 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33 . . . 35 . . . 38, 39 . . . }	36	{ Purses.
	{ Seculars : . . . 9 . . . 13 . . . 18 . . . 21 . . . 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33 . . . 34 . . . 36, 37 . . . 40 : 4 }	4	
1858	{ Brothers : 1, 2 . . . 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24 . . . 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40 : 38 }	38	{ Purses.
	{ Seculars : . . . 3 . . . 7 . . . 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22 . . . 25 . . . 28 . . . 32 . . . 35 . . . 38, 39, 40 : 2 }	2	
1859	{ Brothers : 1, 2, 3 . . . 5, 6, 7, 8 . . . 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24 . . . 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40 : 34 }	34	{ Purses.
	{ Seculars : . . . 4 . . . 9 . . . 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23 . . . 26 . . . 28 . . . 32 . . . 35 . . . 38, 39, 40 : 6 }	6	
1860	{ Brothers : 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8 . . . 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16 . . . 17, 18 . . . 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24 . . . 26 . . . 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34 . . . 36, 37, 38, 39, 40 : 34 }	34	{ Purses.
	{ Seculars : . . . 9 . . . 17, 18 . . . 25 . . . 27 . . . 35 . . . 38, 39, 40 : 5 }	5	

PURSES OBTAINED IN THE ANNUAL CONTESTS BETWEEN THE CITY SCHOOLS OF PARIS, 1848 TILL 1871.—Continued.

1861	{ Brothers : 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10	12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18	20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35	37, 38, 39, 40, 35	{ Purses.
	{ Seculars : 4	11	19	36	{ 5 }
1862	{ Brothers : 1, 2, 4, 6, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18	19, 20	21, 22, 23, 24, 25	31, 32, 33, 35, 36, 37, 38	{ 40 : 31 }
	{ Seculars : 3, 5, 7	19, 20	23	34	{ 9 }
1863	{ Brothers : 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 10, 11, 12	13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18	20, 21, 22	32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37	{ 39, 40 : 34 }
	{ Seculars : 9	13	23	31	{ 6 }
1864	{ Brothers : 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14	15, 16	17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 26	30, 31, 32, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40	{ 30 }
	{ Seculars : 4, 7, 8	15, 16	25	33	{ 10 }
1865	{ Brothers : 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15	16	17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22	24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36	38, 39, 40 : 37
	{ Seculars : 16	23	23	37	{ 3 }
1866	{ Brothers : 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 8, 9, 10, 11	12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18	20	22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28	32, 34, 35
	{ Seculars : 7	12	19	21	38, 40 : 29
1867	{ Brothers : 1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 9, 10	12, 13, 14, 15, 16	18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31	33, 36, 37	39 : 11
	{ Seculars : 2, 8	11	17	33	36, 37
1868	{ Brothers : 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33	34	35, 36, 37, 38	39, 40 : 38	{ 2 }
	{ Seculars : 1	34	38	38	38
1869	{ Brothers : 2, 3, 4, 8, 9, 10	12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19	21, 22	25	32, 33, 34, 35, 36
	{ Seculars : 5, 6, 7	11	20	23, 24	37, 39 : 15
1870	{ Brothers : 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15	16	17, 18, 19, 20, 21	23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35	37, 38, 39, 40 : 35
	{ Seculars : 5, 8	22	22	36	{ 5 }

N. B. The Brothers' Schools, which were forced to close by the Commune, from the first half of April, were not opened till the latter half of June. The dispersion of masters and scholars interfered with the course of studies. Moreover, several good schools were occupied by the military, and were obliged to adjourn indefinitely; notwithstanding these drawbacks, the following are the results:—

1871	{ Brothers : 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13	14, 15, 16	17, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25	31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37	39 : 29
	{ Seculars : 1	18	26, 27, 28, 29, 30	38	40 : 11



Such was and is the work done by the Brothers in their parochial schools. But, their holy Founder gives them a broader field in which to garner in souls to God. He states that the Brothers are *particularly* intended for the poor, but, all through his writings, he shows that the rich and otherwise worldly fortunate, are to be given the benefit of his improved methods. Every grade of practical education is embraced in his system. In his admirable enterprise, children are to be taught to admire all that there is in this world lovely or lowly, created by the good God for man's use and benefit. He was the first to suggest that pupils should be taken to Expositions where the masters should show everything interesting to their pupils. Where zoological gardens were accessible he desired the pupils to be taken there on recreation days. He required the Brothers to explain all the uses and benefits to be found for each animal or plant. Thus, over two hundred years ago he had organized the system of object lessons, which some persons pretend is a modern progressive step. Indeed, such claimants forget that our Divine Lord, who was the most perfect teacher, repeatedly gave object lessons in his public career, when he presented the child as man's model, when he called upon his hearers to examine the birds of the air and the lilies of the field, as containing so many lessons in themselves which would teach man to raise his mind and heart to the Author of every good and perfect gift, by the study of the beautiful things which the world presents to our contemplation, and which are made to render life more happy and agreeable, provided we use these creatures of God, in him and for him : in him by constantly remembering his holy presence ; for him by using these solely and exclusively for his greater honor and glory, and one's own salvation. It was by teaching his pupils to raise their hearts in grateful aspirations to the Most High that the Venerable sought to form a pious generation, or, as expressed lately by our

Most Holy Father : it was thus he sought to make education christian. Such, again, was the Venerable's practice in his various schools at St. Yon. There, he had his flower and seed garden, where Nature's choicest fruit and flowers were grown to please the eye and reasonably gratify the palate. "That nation is safe in which agriculture is in honor," so said an ancient philosopher ; so believed M. De La Salle, as we have already seen by the fact of his opening special classes where the cultivation of the land was pursued on a scientific basis. In his own way and measure, he and his disciples have followed the steps of the Benedictines, thrice blessed men in name as in deed, in the work they did, in the use they made of the wealth thus acquired, in the oft-spoken blessing called upon them by the objects of their largesses. And thus, again, like their divine model, De La Salle and his disciples went about, and have since continued to go about, "doing good."

But, what shall we say of his School of Discipline, where sons of wealthy parents were received—here was indeed a task according to his own heart, in which he did his work so well as to be spoken of through France as the great reformer of youth. His plan was extremely simple, yet at once won the hearts of the young culprits. He refused, in their presence, to hear them spoken of harshly : in most cases, he apparently doubted the unfavorable accounts given him ; he professed himself, and readily became the advocate of all his young wards. Most of their failings he attributed to those who were the first to complain of what resulted from their own misdirection. Instead of a prison, he prepared a quiet, fairly comfortable cell for each culprit. On the walls were panels, and in these nails or pegs : near the window the newly admitted noticed stands which seemed intended for flowers. Cages were also there, at times, but these were empty. Strangely impressed by so many evidences of good things absent, the youthful offenders usually inquired, and soon learn-

ed that all those vacancies would be filled as soon as their own conduct would justify such treatment. Thus it was that the pleasant chirp of the bird was given in exchange for the avoidance of profane or improper words : the panels were graced with pleasant pictures as soon as the juvenile offender had won back his place in the folds of a father's arms or in the recesses of a mother's heart by a frank avowal of previous wrong doing. The flowers bloomed in their prison vases as soon as habits of industry replaced olden-time indolence, and thus imperceptibly, the delinquents of the School of Discipline at St. Yon became model young gentlemen, who were generally removed for a time to the rooms and classes of the boarding-school proper, on another part of the grounds, and next, to the bosom of their delighted families. Such is the evidence furnished by ocular witnesses of the methods adopted by the Venerable De la Salle in his School of Discipline.

## DESCRIPTION OF THE INSTITUTION AT ST. YON.

---

1. Botanical and Horticultural Garden.
2. College Play-grounds.
3. Yard and Workshops.
4. College Yard and Infirmary Building.
5. Residence of Aged and Servant Brothers.
6. College Class-rooms.
7. Rooms of the Correctional Department.
8. Yard of the Correctional Department.
9. Parlors.
10. Chapel. *A*, Brothers' Place; *B*, Pupils' Place; *C*, Public.
11. Gallery for the Prisoners.
12. Chapel Court.
13. Entrance Yard.
14. Store-room.
15. Wardrobe.
16. Cemetery.
17. School of Discipline.
18. Yard and Buildings of the Novitiate.
19. Brothers' Infirmary.
20. Cell of the Ven. De La Salle.
21. Cell of a Servant Brother.
22. Horse and Cow Stables.
23. Barn Yard and Watering Trough.
24. Barns, Mills and sundry other Buildings.
25. Laundry and Drying Room.
26. Fruit and Vegetable Garden.
27. Meadow.
28. House beyond the enclosure—rented out.—Basement of the square building used as Kitchen, Refectory, Bakery and Cellar.



Rue Saint Julien

Rue des Murs Saint Yon



If we pursue our examination still further, we shall find the man of God striving to make the school a happy place. It was his desire that children should learn from every blade, leaf or flower, to love God who made these and all other things. Wherever the Cross shines in the mid-day sun, there will a Christian School be found. Even in the Chinese Empire, in the wilds of the Madagascar swamps the sons of La Salle are perpetuating the good work. A pleasant occurrence from the last named island may fittingly close a chapter, which, despite its length has barely been opened. In this, as in so many other instances, the riches of our subject must consist in "the number of things left unsaid."

"A treaty of commerce was established between France and Madagascar, in 1868. There were two copies to be made: that of France was drawn up by the Chancellor of the Consulate, while Queen Ranavalona was determined that hers should not be inferior in beauty of caligraphy. It was a question of state, in which the distant but dusky friends of France did not wish to hold the second place. The queen's Prime Minister first visited the Protestant schools, and each famous calligraphist gave a specimen of his ability, without satisfying the exacting examiner. An officer who accompanied him, and who had seen the Brothers' schools, bethought him of a young lad named Marc Rabily-Kely, whose copy he had greatly admired. When called into the presence of the minister, Marc gave some off-hand specimens of running-style, gothic, round and lady's hand. At the sight of such characters, new to the oldest inhabitant, Marc Rabily-Kely was declared superior to all the copyists of Tananariva, and acknowledged the first penman of Madagascar. He was at once employed to copy the treaty in the language of the island. He was kept busily engaged an entire day and night, for the document was lengthy, and time pressed. He finished his task at four in the morning with-

out a mistake or an erasure. When the hour arrived for the signing of the copies, the French commissioner placed his copy on the table in presence of the queen and principal personages of the island. Ranavalona's secretary opened a large portfolio, and placed his copy beside the other, and, with a triumphant laugh, he said : 'Look ! which is the better copy ?' All cried out, '*Resy ny vasoha :*' 'The whites are beaten.' When the hero of the occasion was introduced, an outburst of applause welcomed him. The French commissioner gave him one hundred francs, to which the queen added four hundred. He also received a pension of twelve measures of rice, two slaves for his service, and the right, if he chose, to remain twenty years in the Brothers' schools. The queen sent her chief officers to thank Marc's teachers, and Kely's name was proclaimed in all parts of the city of Tananariva by a public crier. This young man was sent to Paris, to receive a higher course of instruction in the Brothers' College of St. Paul."



## CHAPTER IV.

*Spirit and Virtues of the Venerable De La Salle.—The true test of greatness.—Worldlings judged by their exterior.—Why this difference of treatment is necessary.—La Salle's attachment to the Church.—Proofs of the purity of his faith.—Why he gave his Brothers "the Spirit of Faith" as the spirit of their state.—His ruling virtue strong in death.—His unlimited confidence in God.—Exalted idea which faith made him form of the Christian teacher's dignity; nobility of the Mission.—His constant practice of the renovation of God's holy presence.—Effect of his exterior conduct upon strangers.—Sinners seek him for conversion; holy persons to learn the ways of God in spiritual direction.—His manner of reciting the Divine Office.—Respect for the Sacred Vessels, relics and other holy things.—Poverty everywhere except in decorating the house of God, and his Mercy Throne, the Altar.—Manner of wearing the Soutane.—Examples of his watchfulness over himself in all these points.*

In the lives of men whom the world claims as its own, greatest interest is found in the recital of those deeds which have immortalized their name. The chief study in their career consists in discovering the means by which they reached the pinnacle of worldly glory, the circumstances which helped them to attain success, the difficulties over which their genius has triumphed.

The historian of such lives is wholly occupied with their public acts; their private existence is but of secondary importance; often prudence requires us to place a veil over that portion of their course which, if closely examined, would deprive them of their fame in the estimation of truly Christian hearts.



How different it is with the Saints ! It is only by entering into the recesses of their lives, by examining the purity of their motives, the unseen good which they accomplished, that we learn to value them at their true worth. Properly to test their standing, we must read their lives by the light, and weigh their acts in the scales of the Sanctuary. Such is especially the case in the life and work of the Venerable De La Salle. Much as this benefactor of mankind has done for society, we but partially understand his character and appreciate his motives till we lift the veil of modesty and humility with which he screened his inner life from the gaze of the world by which he was surrounded. Much as we admire the work he established, we shall only fully measure its extent and meaning when we follow the holy Founder into his chamber, watch him at prayer, or shudder at the sight of his self-imposed mortifications. Greatly as we admire the wisdom of his rule, its spirit, its full bearing will only become known when we come to learn that most of its precepts were determined after long and weary vigils in which the blood of sacrifice was added to the lever of meditation. Greatly as we admire the wisdom of his school regulations and methods, we can really seize upon and grasp their ample bearing and the blessing which attaches to their adoption when we learn that the Venerable was accustomed to remain for hours motionless, entirely absorbed in the study of his disciples in the class-room, after which he retired to his cell, and having implored the light of heaven by fervent prayer, then formed laws for the guidance of his teachers, laws of such consummate wisdom that they have never been equalled.

We have already seen how great and useful a work the Venerable has accomplished ; it now remains to find by what means, beyond mere human skill and intelligence, he succeeded to such an unexpected degree. In his case as in every other where the

work to be done was the work of God, shall we find that the wisdom of the world is folly with God : that the weak things of this world doth God employ to confound the strong ; that men's ways are not the Lord's, that the folly of the cross is the only true wisdom, that a work which is not founded on the cross is built upon a sandy foundation, that the arm of the Lord is never shortened, and when he finds a soul generous in its impulses, fixed in its purpose to serve him, faithful in corresponding with the vocation to which it is called, of such he makes a vessel of election to carry the light of divine truth, Christian instruction, to such as have hitherto wandered in the darkness of ignorance and death. Such in every particular shall we find the Venerable De La Salle in the spirit by which he was animated, in the virtues which he practised.

Before preaching, all the Saints exemplified in their own lives the truths and virtues which they exhorted others to embrace. Before giving his spiritual children the SPIRIT of FAITH as the characteristic virtue of their state, he himself was "the just man who lives by faith." Faith was the ruling motive which made him see and adore God in all things. This virtue preserved him from the snares into which so many of his day fell, through the wiles of Jansenism. It was faith in the Church, and the teaching of her Supreme Pontiff, that made him accept the declarations of the Holy See, even when his own ecclesiastical superiors delayed in their submission. Roman priest was the common title which he added to his name, that all might know his attachment to the Chair of Peter ; and in dying, his last words were that his children "should never fail in their devotedness to Rome." Though a Doctor of Divinity, he carefully avoided all unnecessary discussion of disputed points, yet when duty called upon him to make open profession of his faith, pen and tongue combined to make known his sentiments. Silent as he usually was under calumny and reproach, he never suf-

ferred his devotion to the Church to be questioned. Among the few letters he wrote in self-defence, the most powerful was that in which he declared his abhorrence of the new doctrines, his inviolable attachment to the faith and doctrine of the Holy Roman Apostolic Church. Unmoved, he saw his prosperous Novitiate of Marseilles closed by the Jansenists, rather than comply in the least with their demands, and his greatest care and anxiety was to instruct his Brothers, and defend them against the snares of those who sought to entangle them in the new doctrines. The innovators knew well that if they could get so efficient a body of teachers in their interests, that their evil work would be greatly advanced. Thank heaven, to the zeal of the holy Founder, and the obedience of his children, the poison of Jansenism never entered the Institute. Not satisfied with writing and exhortation, the venerable servant of God offered up the severest practices of penance and mortification in behalf of the afflicted Church, and in these was joined by all his spiritual children to such an extent, that both he and the ecclesiastical authorities were obliged to interfere, lest by the severity of their fasts and macerations, the Brothers might unfit themselves for the arduous duties of the class-room.

This spirit of faith and union with the Church, led him to manifest his devotedness to her spirit in every particular. Thus, having been invited by the pastor of a church in Calais to sing high Mass on the feast of the Assumption of the M. B. Virgin Mary, he accepted; but, to his great surprise, the pastor in his sermon never even alluded to the prerogatives of Mary, as indicated in this great festival. The Venerable plainly indicated his displeasure, which the pastor perceiving, could only remove by promising to repair his fault on the following Sunday, which he did to the great astonishment of his flock, hitherto unaccustomed to hearing their pastor speak in such glowing terms of the glory of our Immaculate Queen.

But, to have faith, and to live by faith are quite different things. To live by faith is to make it the rule and principle of one's conduct, actions and sentiments ; it must direct our desires, projects and undertakings. This life of faith gives a vivifying sap to all one's actions and thoughts ; in this case, the virtue of faith rules as mistress of our heart ; it is consulted in every difficulty, doubt and embarrassment ; in one word, when living by faith we judge of nothing, determine upon no enterprise, do no action save through thoughts inspired by this lofty virtue, and by reasons suggested by Christian motives. It is the spirit of faith which raises the christian above himself by filling him with the spirit of Christ Jesus ; it is the thought of this Divine Saviour, his sentiments and his dispositions which make the soul, thus animated, live in a manner worthy of God, by leading a life altogether divine.

Thus we find that the Venerable De La Salle looked upon all things by the light of faith ; everything was judged by supernatural light ; in his views, all things drew their value from the price placed upon them when weighed in the scales of this sublime virtue. Through the influence of this faith by which he was animated, he found himself raised above the false notions held by the world, ever on his guard against human motives or those dictated by worldly wisdom ; never imposed upon by personal interests ; ever vanquishing worldly maxims by the study of the gospel precepts, which he accepted as the unique rule of his life. From this came his wonderful confidence in God, his unalterable attachment to the divine will, as manifested in the various occurrences of life, causing him to exclaim "God be blessed" in the midst of his trials and difficulties.

It was this same spirit of faith which made him see Christ in the little ones instructed by his Brothers. He took the greatest pleasure in replacing his disciples in class, which he did with such modesty, zeal and patience, that it was impossible not to



form the highest ideas of a position which he so singularly appreciated.

He was persuaded that the office of Christian teacher is most necessary to the Church, and most valued in the sight of God, as may be seen in the decrees of Councils, and the example of the Saints. This employment, he felt, particularly demanded the fulness of the spirit of faith, since without it, an office so august and divine in its bearings, becomes merely secular to the carnal eye. It was his desire that the Brothers should look upon themselves as the spiritual fathers of their children, the co-operators of Jesus Christ; imitators of the apostles, and of the greatest doctors, who considered it a singular happiness to be employed in the nurseries of the Church and Society in which youth is brought up in the fear of the Lord, and the practice of every moral and social virtue. It is only this spirit of faith which can induce the Brother of the Christian Schools to look upon his class as a safe asylum, a refuge in which young souls, threatened with shipwreck at every moment, may seek a safe harbor from the storms of uprising passions, and the force of the waves of evil habits.

If such were his sentiments in regard to the school-room, we may without difficulty form an idea of the awe and respect with which he entered the holy place, either to lay his petitions before God, or to lead his children thither, when after having placed them in their seats, he went to the altar, where he appeared more like a seraph than a man, such being the extraordinary devotion expressed on his countenance, that the pupils who were present were spell-bound by his appearance, and forgot all those little distractions and tricks which they are wont to be guilty of, even in the divine presence, through the thoughtlessness natural to their years.

“Where he entered the Church,” says his earliest biographer,” his modesty, reverence and holy fear struck every beholder,

warning him of the sanctity of God's house, and of the respect due thereto, while his appearance likewise reproached less reverent worshippers who happened to be in the divine presence.

"Despite all efforts, the servant of God thus made himself known, and all who beheld him, sought an introduction. Even the most remote portions of France, whither he retired to be secluded from the many visitors who sought his advice and direction, his extraordinary piety in the Church made him known; for, despite his humility, he felt obliged to give these external marks of respect and adoration. Those who beheld him could not withdraw their eyes from this stranger who gave such extraordinary proofs of his faith in the real presence of our Divine Lord in the holy Eucharist; for his exterior bespoke the devotion of a saint, and the modesty of an angel. This impelled lookers-on to enquire who this edifying stranger was,—when they learned that he was the Founder of the Brothers of the Christian Schools, one of the most distinguished men of his time."

It was evident in his every movement that he never lost the presence of God; and his devotions performed out of the Church increased the conviction that before giving his spiritual children one of his most touching precepts\* he must have faithfully realized it in his own person. Usually he recited his breviary kneeling; rarely either standing or seated; always bareheaded, not even wearing his beretta or skull-cap, despite the inclemency of seasons; while the expression of his countenance was such during this holy exercise, as to convince every beholder that he fully appreciated the happiness of being thus associated with the entire Church, in her ministers, offering up unceasing prayer for the people, while he gave himself up unreservedly to these holy

---

\* "God's presence you will duly keep,  
And thus immortal treasures reap."—(*Morning Prayer.*)

transports so often remarked in his life, and which are the special gift of pure, detached souls. When he recited the Office with his dear novices, his piety was even more remarkable, for he strove to the fullest extent to carry out the wishes of the Church by reciting those soul-inspiring psalms, worthily, attentively and devoutly: *worthily*, by showing in his manner of expression that he knew to whom he was speaking, and that he never forgot the veneration due to the divine Majesty: *attentively*, seeming to relish the *expression of the sacred psalms*, and to enter fully into the sentiments which they suggest to the soul that is filled by the Holy Spirit; *devoutly*, by taking singular pleasure in this holy exercise, and never appearing more delighted than when thus engaged speaking to, and of God. To this enumeration we might add that he pronounced each word so distinctly, observed the pauses so punctually and required others to do the same that "as much time was occupied in chanting this short office of the M. B. Virgin, as is usually taken to sing the great office of the Church." The more fully to carry out this edifying manner of reciting Mary's praises, he, like the youngest novice, went to the centre of the chapel to kiss the floor whenever he made any mistake.

His respect for holy things was most remarkable, and his desire to see the house of God fittingly cared for was such that despite his love and practice of religious poverty, he considered nothing too rich for the service of the altar, or the decoration of the chapel. This same spirit filled him with veneration for holy relics, sacred vessels, devotional pictures or statues, and especially for holy water, of which he constantly made use, and exhorted his inferiors to do likewise. No room was to be without its holy water font, and he required the Sign of the Cross to be made with every mark of attention and devotion, in which he was the first to practice what he preached.

We have already seen how, even in youth, he took a holy

pleasure in the services of the Church and her other devout ceremonies. Later when he had entered the sanctuary his respect for everything connected with the priestly dress increased tenfold. Notwithstanding his extraordinary reserve in words, he could ill repress the holy indignation he felt when, for the slightest pretext, any of his clerical friends dressed in any other than their ecclesiastical garb. No length of travel, no heat or other inclemency of season could induce him to wear any save the dress which he had assumed when he entered the sanctuary.

And yet, we are assured by all biographers, but especially by his first historian, that in all this there was not the least trace of severity of manner or asperity of character. On the contrary, such was the gentle smile which always played about his countenance, such the Christ-like suavity of manner, that sinners instinctively drew near to him, as one from whom there came out a virtue which diffused itself as a gentle yet irresistible influence upon all around him. Of the Venerable De La Salle we may therefore truly say : "*and there was not found the like to him in glory, who kept the law of the Most High, and was in covenant with him.*" (*Eccles. xxiv.*)

When reading of such traits we are constantly reminded of similar examples in the life of Our Divine Lord whose looks were such as to be spoken of specially in the Holy Scriptures, and quite as earnestly as when repeating his divine words. It was the look of our dear Saviour that caused the ceaseless well of Peter's tears to gush up from out a heart that only came to know its own possibilities of love, when by sin it had come to know the depths to which it might become debased. It was the sweetness of Jesus, probably, that first touched the heart of Mary, the sinner, and the many other characters mentioned in the New Testament, as lasting proofs of the power of God's grace. The good thief was probably another conquest of the glance of Jesus ; at least, his serenity of manner under the un-



heard-of treatment he underwent, did its work on the heart of the public criminal. Imitating his dear Lord in saving men, De La Salle sought to reproduce in himself the wonderful influence which the Divine Redeemer was wont to assert over men, by words and deeds, which marked him out as one unlike the ordinary sons of men.

## CHAPTER V.

*Virtues continued.—How the Venerable preserved the Angelic Virtue. Evidence of his Superior.—Sayings of St. Chrysostom.—La Salle's extraordinary custody of his senses.—An example of his extreme care on this point.—Amused and edified companions.—Confidence in God.—His, the result of faith.—With God for him, he cared not for men.—Striking evidence of unmeasured confidence.—How men proved false.—He divides his fortune among the poor.—His charity.—Forgiveness of injury.—Love of prayer.—His prolonged vigils.—Victory over self.—Kneeling on shells.—Christian Wisdom.—Its marks given by St. Paul found in De La Salle.—Modesty.—Rules he gave after practising them.—Regulation imposed upon himself to preserve the holy presence of God.—How he treated delinquents and hardened sinners.—“He bore their burdens.”—Regularity.—Examples of his great love for this guardian of the exterior man.—Conduct as an inferior.—His desire to be least thought of, except where menial offices were to be given.—The crowning virtue of his life.—Obedience.—He strives “to do all things well.”—Striking examples he gave of this most essential virtue.*

What we have thus far spoken of the holy servant of God, of his respect for holy things, his ever constant remembrance of God's presence, his spirit of faith, and attention to all that referred to God and his service, will prepare us to fully believe the extraordinary details furnished us by his earliest historian as to his love for, and zeal in, preserving the angelic virtue.

The subject has already been referred to when treating of his years of trial and probation, yet, we must, to do justice to our hero, enter into other details.

At all times he manifested the most extraordinary care in the

preservation of this most delicate of graces. As a child, a scholar, before, as after his consecration to the service of the altar, he was filled with zeal for this holy virtue. A most avowed enemy to scruples in any form, he seemed to consider no precautions too great where the holy virtue was concerned.

Though not scrupulous, he acted as though he were, and as though he perceived danger in a multitude of occurrences and incidents, where others went forward without hesitancy. He cultivated it as the most precious gem in the ecclesiastical crown, being persuaded that in the language of St. John Chrysostom, "the mouth and hands of those who bring down upon the altar the virgin body of the Man-God, the spouse of virgins, should be purer than heaven's rays."

His prudence in the preservation of so fragile a plant, as is the angelic virtue, led him at times to perform acts which seemingly bordered upon the extravagant.

Thus, we read that being ill, and learning that his grandmother wished to see him, he arose from his bed, and received her in the parlor. When told by his respected relative that such an excess of prudence was unnecessary, he smilingly answered that there was doubtless no danger whatever in his venerable grandmother calling upon him as she had desired, but that his position as superior required him to give such an example to those upon whom he constantly impressed the importance of this holy virtue, which can be fully preserved only at the price of seemingly unnecessary vigilance. He paid but very few visits and these of the shortest possible duration: when such were paid him he insisted upon the fulfilment of every point of the Rules treating on this subject, and exacted that his Brothers should be equally on their guard. Indeed, his practical lessons on this point were far more forcible than any rules or regulations could have been.

In his writings upon this subject he dwelt with an earnest-

ness born of conviction. "Take care that the love of the world may not enter into your house, that is into your mind and heart. . . . I regret that you are compelled to have so much communication with the world. I can easily conceive that your piety has diminished. Return once for all to prayer, I beseech you. . . . Corruption is very great in this world ; we must be particularly attentive and vigilant over ourselves, to be freed from it, and I bless God who has given you grace to preserve yourself from it up to this time."

In treating of this holy virtue in his Rules and Constitutions he clearly shows that in his mind, the preservation of the holy virtue in all its integrity, both interior and exterior was an essential. In fact, any Brother guilty of a violation could no longer be tolerated in the Society. He says :

"The Brothers who have made the vow of chastity, and those who dispose themselves to make it should be persuaded that none can be allowed to remain in the Institute in whom anything against purity has appeared or may appear. The Brothers shall therefore make it their first and chief care, in regard to their exterior, to excel in everything that concerns the holy virtue of chastity, in any manner whatever. They shall be careful neither to see nor allow themselves to be seen in a manner even the least immodest. The first garment they shall put on on rising, and the last they shall take off on retiring, shall be their robe. . . . . Thus, the Venerable wished his disciples to aspire to the perfection practised by St. Louis, of Gonzaga, who would not allow his own mother to see his feet uncovered. Here we are reminded of the touching narrative of St. Peter of Alcantara. A few moments before dying, the infirmarian felt the saint's hands and feet, upon which St. Peter exclaimed : "Touch me not Brother, I am still alive and in the flesh and may therefore offend God !"

What a lesson to youth, so reckless, constantly exposed, and



who fail to bear in mind that they too, have immortal souls to save, quite as precious to them as were the souls of Louis Aloysius, the Blessed John Berchmans, St. Peter of Alcantara and the Venerable De La Salle to these great servants of God. Never forget, youthful reader, that you carry about the precious virtue of chastity in frail vessels. That man is his own greatest enemy, that after having vanquished all other opponents, he still has the domestic enemy of his own passions to overcome. This task is the work of a life-time. Happy he, who like the Venerable De La Salle, can feel that the struggle has not been fruitless, that he has achieved the greatest of victories—the victory over self.

What precautions are you taking to preserve the lily of chastity? What guard do you place upon your eyes which the prophet calls windows, by which sin may enter, and death be given to the soul? What is the nature of your reading? Who are your companions? What are the subjects of their conversation? What special devotions do you practise in honor of your dear Angel-guardian, and the Most Blessed and Immaculate Virgin, to preserve you from the thousand and one dangers by which you are surrounded? These are serious questions upon which your eternal hereafter assuredly hangs. Think well on it. To-day and its results are yours, to-morrow may be no longer at your command. Whatever you are to do in the all-important work of preserving the most delicate of virtues, must be done well, at once, and persevered in until we are called to receive the reward of such precautions. Never was it truer than in this case, to say what was said of another treasure: "Eternal vigilance is the price of purity." It suffices not to pray; something else, as all saints tell us, is essential. Christ himself says, "*Watch and pray*" that you may not be surprised, showing us that even prayer alone is insufficient, that we must not tempt God, remembering, on the contrary, that: "he who

loveth the danger shall perish therein." It was by such vigilance, added to prayer and other practices that the Venerable De La Salle is believed to have lived and died a virgin. Of this, says his first biographer: "Fasts, cilices, and other penitential acts of which the saints made use to control their passions, were habitual to the Venerable." Hence, we have reason to believe that he is now among the virgins who follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth, and that he sings the Canticle which such privileged souls can alone sing. It is the opinion of all the ancient Brothers who have been most intimate with their holy Founder, and who had most closely watched his career, that he gave all those indications which go to show that baptismal innocence had been preserved. This conviction was still further strengthened after his death, to such an extent, that Brother Barthelèmi, his successor, as General, and who for years had been the Venerable's spiritual adviser, declared in his letter announcing the death of the great servant of God: "From all I can learn, I believe our holy Father ranks among the virgins, and that he always preserved his baptismal robe untarnished."

When a saint's faith has been spoken of, much has already been said to prove him imbued with unlimited hope and confidence in God, since the virtue of hope and its consequences derive their strength from the first of the theological virtues.

What the rays are in regard to the sun, confidence in God is with reference to faith. The one is the measure of the other, as well as the proof of its existence. It is from faith that hope draws its life, its nourishment and increase. When faith is slight and languishing, confidence in God is enfeebled; if faith be lively and animated, confidence in God will be grand and heroic.

"What saint," asks the Venerable's biographer, "has had more reason to rely solely upon God in his enterprises, than

the subject of our sketch ? Who has been more abused, calumniated and persecuted than the Founder of the Christian Schools, and who, therefore, has had greater need of unlimited confidence in the divine power and goodness to bring him forth successful and victorious from such combined opposition ! Parents, friends, benefactors, superiors and inferiors with one accord seemed united in trying the confidence of the great servant of God, and of the people.

It was in the midst of all these trials, many of which have been already named, that his unswerving confidence in the power and goodness of God was shown. It may, indeed, be said that this was one of his distinctive characteristics. During the forty years which were spent in laying the lasting foundations of his work, how many and how grievous were the trials through which he had to pass ! At one time he is insulted in his own home ; at another, driven from the door of one of his own communities ; here, he is deserted by some of his children to whom he has confided a work specially dear to his heart ; there, he is called upon to defend himself in unjust law-suits ; his Brothers in one place are ill-treated because of their firmness in their faith ; in another, after working earnestly and constantly for an entire year, they are deprived of the necessities of life ; elsewhere, schools opened under the most smiling auspices, are as suddenly closed ; while in others, he finds his children laboring hard all day to find themselves without even a loaf of bread at night ! More than once he and his companions were followed through the streets and stoned, because of the poverty of the dress they wore ; while in those cities in which men left him undisturbed, he often found his disciples victims of the keenest suffering, resulting from overwork or sickness. In all these cases, so different and so trying in their nature, he never allowed one word of murmur, or an expression of want of confidence to escape his lips. If tried by

hunger, he goes to the tabernacle, and striking the door gently, he says : " Lord, thy children have no bread," and forthwith a plentiful supply is found at the parlor door. Are his children pursued by unjust lawsuits ? he makes a pilgrimage with his threatened community, and the Help of Christians becomes his successful advocate. Do cardinals, archbishops and bishops drive him from their reception rooms ? he retires, but not without first kissing the hand that smote, and which, in most cases, was thus forced to conclude by blessing where it meant to banish. Is the whole country one charnel house where hunger and cold prepared the way for suffering and disease ? He opens the door of his Novitiate, refuses admission to none, and sees the evil days pass without serious inconvenience when the richest communities had been brought to the verge of financial destruction.

Who strengthened him in such trials ? By what strange influence was he enabled to smile in the midst of his affliction ? Follow him to one of his communities. The very essentials of existence are wanting. Food there is none ; credit they have not ; hopes of better days are not to be entertained. What will be his course ? To withdraw his Brothers and leave God's work but half done ? No ; your Christian instinct at once responds, and a like answer was the Venerable's. After listening to the Director's sad recital and having seen its verification in the surroundings he says : " My Dear Brother Director, do you believe in the Gospel ? " " Most assuredly," his spiritual son replies ; " well then," added the Venerable, " seek first the kingdom of God and his justice and all else will be added unto you over and above." The Director believed and was soon rewarded for his virtuous course. Providence supplied all that was necessary, for no sooner had the Brothers' sad state been made known to some worthy families than their every need was supplied, and this with a generosity which repaid them more than a hundred-fold for past sufferings and privations.





THE VENERABLE DE LA SALLE DISTRIBUTING HIS GOODS TO THE POOR.

We have already seen the Venerable distributing his fortune to the poor ; the more we consider this heroic act and the disastrous character of the times in which he made the sacrifice, the more fully we shall be convinced of his abiding confidence in Him who feeds the birds of the air and who tells us that even the hairs of our head are numbered. His confidence in spiritual matters was not less remarkable. This we perceive in the letters he wrote to his Brothers and likewise to other religious or lay persons who corresponded with him, seeking advice in their interior struggles and difficulties. To all he was wont to say that their confidence in God should be in proportion to their spiritual misery. He told them that their reliance on the goodness of the Almighty should be increased, according to the number and the enormity of their transgressions, like holy King David who said: "I will rely upon the Lord, *because of mine iniquities.*" Had he been ever a just man, it seemed to the saintly prince that he would have had fewer motives of confidence, because the Almighty would have fewer opportunities of manifesting his merciful designs towards a poor, frail mortal. To one of his spiritual daughters who was greatly troubled, he wrote these touching and encouraging lines :

"Never allow yourself to be foolishly persuaded that you are forsaken by God ; on the contrary, believe that He is more than ever disposed to receive you into his arms. His mercy manifests itself in proportion to the greatness of your wretchedness. The more abandoned you seemingly are, the more abundantly will His mercies be shown in your favor. He knows the extent of your weakness ; that you require His grace to establish and confirm you, when weakness and cowardice would cause you to lose ground. "Truly," adds the author of "Thoughts of the Venerable De La Salle," "those lessons of confidence in God came with fitting force from the mouth and pen of so patient and confiding a man of God!"



The work inaugurated by the Venerable and the devotedness which he manifested for the poor who flocked to his classes, sufficiently attest his charity. Indeed his whole life may be classed as one continued practice of this sublime virtue. If any further proof were required, we may find it in the alacrity with which he forgave those who had been guilty of the greatest injustice against him; who, not content with defaming his fair name, went still further by depriving him of large sums left him to assist in establishing his work, but which he invariably abandoned to claimants whose right he might easily have contested. Thus it was that he literally fulfilled the counsel: "If they seize thy coat, give them thy cloak likewise; and if they buffet thee on the right cheek, turn to them thy left also."

It was in the holy exercise of prayer and meditation that the servant of God found strength to practise those sublime virtues which we have so cursorily mentioned, and which can only be preserved and increased by the practice of union with God through the constant study and application of his Holy Word. De La Salle's life was one continued act of union with God. When he left St. Sulpice he was already noted for his love of mental prayer; his after years saw him constantly growing in the earnestness with which he devoted himself to this holy exercise. After his ordination he seemed uniquely attentive to the divine presence, each day beheld him offering the divine sacrifice with increased fervor, for his days were spent in uninterrupted thanksgiving after, or in preparation for, this great sacrifice. His conversation was no longer with ordinary men, but, rather, so far as duty would allow, with the angels of heaven, or with perfect men upon earth. His prayer seemed unintermitting, and on several occasions, when he was believed to be at rest, asleep, some of his disciples found him lost in the delights of contemplation, or, as happened repeatedly, he was found asleep on the floor, his *prie-Dieu* toppled over, for

he had only relinquished prayer, when in spite of his efforts to the contrary, "tired nature sank to rest." It was in part to this practice of praying or meditating till he thus fell prostrate upon the hard floor, that his physicians attributed the acute attacks of rheumatism from which he suffered so keenly. In his earlier years, when the hours he devoted to study took much of the time he desired to devote to the holy exercise of mental prayer, his struggles against sleep were of a truly heroic character, for, when all other means failed, he courageously knelt upon broken shells, the first moment of drowsiness being instantly stopped by the sharpest of pains.

"Often," adds his first historian, "he was found in the same posture at half-past four in the morning as he had occupied the previous evening at night prayer."

It was his constant effort to beget a like spirit of prayer and meditation among his Brothers. For this purpose he wrote a detailed "METHOD OF MENTAL PRAYER," in which he enters into such minute details that it is impossible for any one, faithful to the precepts of this precious work, to fail to become a man of prayer, after the model of his own holy Founder. Of his "Method of Meditation," a learned author has said: "Unfortunately this explanation is too little known; but his own children can never drink too deeply from the spiritual waters which flow from the sacred source."

"Mental Prayer," wrote the Venerable, "is to be preferred to all other forms of devotion. After the recitation of the Divine Office, it should be the most essential point of Rule.

"Be all the more faithful to mental prayer, since you find that the Almighty on the one hand draws you thereto, and that, on the contrary, the evil spirit uses every artifice and plea to draw you therefrom.

"Never omit meditation unless prevented by illness. . . . This holy exercise will dispel the clouds of ignorance which darken



your mind. Be filled with ideas and principles of faith. You are in God's holy presence, which is already more than you deserve. Lay no value on mere feelings or sensibilities, be rather on your guard against them."

A man of prayer and meditation necessarily becomes spiritually enlightened and wise, since his views of things, the value he places upon them, in every case correspond with those of God. We have ample proof of this in the life of the Venerable De La Salle.

We may safely say that Christian wisdom is a virtue as rare as it is necessary, for it is the science of the saints, the mistress of the spiritual life, the guardian and directress of virtues, which apart from her are useless to salvation. Hence the many eulogies which we find of this virtue in Holy Writ; so many means of acquiring it, so many exhortations urging us to beg it incessantly of the Almighty.

Once we admit that the wisdom of the world is folly with God, and that the fear of the Lord is the beginning of true wisdom, we can at once perceive at what variance with the world and its maxims the truly wise Christian, but above all, the saint will be found.

Thus, everything in the life of the Venerable De La Salle served to amuse the world, and afforded ample matter for its sharp and cutting ridicule. The entire designs, conduct and proceedings of the servant of God in establishing the Institute of the Brothers of the Christian Schools called forth unstinted criticism. To mere worldly men it was incomprehensible that teachers should live in comparative silence and retreat; the spectacle of a distinguished Canon, or a Doctor of Divinity dressed in the modest garb of a Brother was more than even many, otherwise religiously inclined, could understand or explain. The extraordinary fervor shown by both Founder and followers was adjudged of that class which the Apostle describes

as not being within bounds. The critics declared that the zeal of the new Apostles was not according to science, their virtue was wanting, said the fault finders, in those wise safeguards which prudence dictates. "If such was the estimate formed by those who were but partially able to judge of the Venerable and his children at home among his own people he was still more severely judged by those of other cities. While praising his extraordinary piety, there was left the sting of reproach, inasmuch as De La Salle was accused of wishing to appear more devoted to his mission than those who were willing to admit the excellence of the work, without assuming the duties of a worker. While admitting his zeal, they denied its prudence; while endorsing his mission, they found fault with the missionaries. Like all worldly-wise, these otherwise good persons wished perfection in the beginning, strangely forgetting that our divine Lord himself took years to train his Apostles. Fortunately, the Venerable was of material out of which saints are made. As already remarked, he allowed the world to talk, while he pursued his career. As in the case of all those who had undertaken great works for God before him, he was not surprised at the censure passed upon his work and motives. The virtue of such labors in the vineyard of Christ is beyond the grasp of most minds; as a natural result, they are first misunderstood, then misrepresented, even by good men. Indeed, it has often been remarked that divine Providence allows some of his most chosen servants to be the most severe upon others, equally holy, engaged in a cause equally good, but which is not understood by those who unwittingly oppose it. Thus does the Almighty use saints to form other saints. Such was the experience of the Venerable De La Salle. Many well-meaning persons opposed his work and mission, some going so far as to censure and even persecute him. He was spoken of as a person with exaggerated views of life, headstrong in his way of

effecting the good he sought to accomplish. But here their opposition exhausted itself. It could not go beyond, for the personal life of the holy servant of God was such as to disarm criticism. However the best of men might differ from his view of life, none could point to a single act or word of the Founder's which did not bespeak the heavenly wisdom by which all his proceedings were marked. His most declared enemies were forced to admit that he was a saint, yet they ceased not to say that he was a most imprudent one. This accusation has fallen upon every one whose virtues have been heroic in degree, for extraordinary sanctity sometimes appears eccentric, even to good people, and necessarily draws down unmerited but certain criticism.

The wisdom of the Venerable possessed all the characteristics attributed to that beautiful virtue by St. Paul.

Its first effect is to inspire one with a singular attraction for purity of heart, body and mind. Now, all the historians of his life unite in assuring us that one of the great objects of his spiritual efforts was to preserve this triple purity. He had nothing more at heart, and for this purpose, as already mentioned, added the most severe mortifications to a ceaseless vigilance over his body and its senses, his mind and its faculties.

The second characteristic of wisdom is to love peace; to observe order in all one's actions, to make God his sole object. Who can fail to recognize in the life of the Venerable how fully he realized this second characteristic? His rule of life was to give way in everything where duty did not require the opposite, even so far as to allow his own house to be pillaged by his enemies. He never defended himself personally, against anybody, most carefully avoided all processes in court, even allowing his enemies to despoil his Institute of property that had been bequeathed it, while he even went so far as to submit the Rules to those for whom they had been written when



his own disciples would willingly have accepted them without discussion from his hands. What order reigned in and about the Institute he directed ! It is said that though eighty persons were assembled in the house of St. Yon, that visitors, judging from the silence that usually reigned, might have supposed it quite abandoned. Such were the silence and regularity which reigned therein, that these alone were sufficient indications of the fervor with which God was served by La Salle and his spiritual children. Still more do we find this spirit of peace and long enduring patience shown in La Salle's conduct when a new superior was sent by the Ecclesiastical authorities to replace the holy Founder in his own community. He showed M. De Brou, who was appointed to that office the different parts of the house, explained the regulations, and finally assembled the Brothers to introduce the new superior. The result was an eloquent tribute to the virtue of the Venerable, and to the excellent good sense and prudence of the proposed superior. In vain did La Salle urge upon his disciples to acquiesce in the new arrangement : their decision was final. They had associated themselves with M. De La Salle to do a work which the Almighty had inspired him to undertake. If he broke through his part of the agreement by withdrawing from the work, their part of the contract, said they, was no longer binding. In vain did De La Salle strive to convince them that they were bound to accept the decision of the Archbishop. They replied that both sides of the question had not been heard, and that in the meantime, they would wait till this full explanation had been made before accepting the change. It was then that the virtue and prudence of M. De Brou were seen. "I shall never accept the keys of a house which, while opening the doors, will close the hearts of its inmates against me," were his words to the Cardinal Archbishop, to whom he gave so glowing an account of the good order, regularity, silence, and union of mind and



heart that reigned throughout the new community, that His Eminence was the first to admire the conduct of the good Brothers in so firmly remaining attached to their Founder. The only sad heart that day was De La Salle's. He had hoped to escape superiority ; already he deemed himself gladly the least of his community. But God willed otherwise. It is not till later, that he will prove "his fitness to command by his extraordinary eagerness to obey."

St. Paul tells us that modesty is the third characteristic of true wisdom. We shall soon see the degree to which he carried this virtue; meanwhile, let us refer to the fourth indication of the virtue we are studying—docility. Surely we have found evidences without number proving the degree to which the Venerable practised this virtue,—as a child, as a youth, a cleric, a priest, he was obedient in all things. As a seminarian he had never violated any rule ; at the age of seventy "he was more regular than the youngest novice."

Union of heart and a spirit of concord are the fifth mark which the great Apostle gives of holy wisdom ; and in this as in so many other points, our hero has furnished numberless examples showing that he was ready to make any and every sacrifice which did not imply a shirking of principle or duty, rather than violate the law of forbearance.

His whole life was one series of concessions, whereby he sought to procure God's glory by preserving the virtue dearest to his heart. Where he could not, without failing in his duty to the mission he had undertaken, give way to the wishes of others, he presented his own views with such gentleness of manner and such total absence of self-interest that he drew his opponents to his way of thinking. Where bishops sought to change articles of the Rule, or other members of the clergy sought to interfere in the internal administration of the community, he submitted so far as he was personally concerned ; when, as a matter of

duty he opposed innovations which his own experience and the spiritual light with which he was favored, taught him to be inadmissible, his words were so well timed, his reasons urged with such singleness of purpose, as to convince those whom he was constrained to oppose, that no other motive than God's glory held sway in his mind. When, on two or three occasions, rather than create a greater trouble, he allowed his opponents to have their way, results soon proved the wisdom of his previous opposition. Thus, when on a certain occasion, a Brother was retained in a position despite the wishes of the holy Founder, and to gratify a pastor's wish, the departure of the faithless religious within a short time after the concession, taught the worthy priest that his own interests and those of the unhappy delinquent would have been best served by allowing the Venerable to carry out his own plans for the general welfare of religion and of the Institute. and of its members in particular.

Another mark of religious wisdom is that he who possesses it takes all in good part, and is a declared enemy to criticism and fault finding. In no other particular has the servant of God more fully proved his claim to the possession of this virtue. In his Rule he forbids his Brothers to speak of any one unless it be to say something to his advantage ; other communities are never to be named in a critical manner, and the whole drift of his legislation in the chapter on Silence, Recreation and kindred subjects, bears the impress of his desire to live at peace with all men.

Finally, the apostle indicates "simplicity" as the crowning mark of the truly wise man. Let the reader recall the many instances in which this virtue has been seen in the life and work of the holy Founder : no other proof will be necessary to convince him that the Venerable De La Salle was truly wise. His simplicity shows itself in the unaffected manner in which his piety as a youth shone in his own family ; later, simplicity

in his tastes was shown when he regulated his own house as though it had been a convent ; to this, add the manner in which he invited M. Nyel and companions to his own home, and the picture is sufficiently complete. Should doubt still linger, let the reader bear in mind that all through life, the Venerable's delight was to be with the children of men, a disposition which in itself is synonymous with simplicity, and the conviction that he practised this virtue in a high degree, must be complete.

His modesty was not less remarkable. It was this virtue which betrayed him, in spite of his desire to remain unknown. Wherever he went, this virtue was known to all men, who thereupon declared that wherever the Venerable appeared, surely the Lord was nigh. The Holy Ghost himself assures us that the countenance is the mirror of the soul, and so it was with the holy Founder : the serenity of his look, the mildness of expression, the unassuming candor which shone in his whole exterior, declared how fully he practised the queenly virtue of modesty. His language added to the edification furnished by his looks ; while the modesty of his dress, his manner of walking, his suavity of expression, were all so many voices which proclaimed aloud his worth, and drew upon him universal admiration. He was the first to practise what he commanded others, when he prescribed in his Rules : "It is essentially necessary that the Brothers be particularly distinguished for their modesty, humility and wisdom in all their exterior acts. . . . They shall endeavor to have a cheerful, rather than a gloomy countenance, and shall never exhibit the least appearance of any worldly passion. They shall be very careful that their movements are such as to edify all who see them."

And thus, as expressed by one of the holy Fathers, the Venerable De La Salle was, in his own external conduct, a reflection of the ways of God. His looks caused sinners to be



confused, and to conceive a horror of the vicious career they were pursuing ; which feeling is often the key to conversion. Such was the power of his glance, that it in some manner communicated to others that spiritual correction of which their hidden faults gave them need ; while it at the same time became a source of gladness and consolation to those upon whom his intuitive knowledge of their interior enabled him to look upon with approbation. “ Oh ! ” exclaims the same holy writer, “ what a gift it is to be of service to our neighbor, even by our very presence.” Speaking of the high degree to which the Venerable practised this virtue, his first historian writes : “ In the modesty of this servant of God, I find reproduced the traits which St. Athanasius describes as having been seen in the great St. Anthony. Such was the modesty that shone upon his countenance that he was at once distinguished from all who surrounded him. His sanctity of soul and purity of mind were indicated upon his features ; he was ever gay, tranquil, unchanged. There was something so tempered with sweetness in his gravity ; such was the outgrowth of his Christian love, in his joyous methods of action, that he was everyone’s favorite, for his face was “ *as that of an angel* ” according to the expression of the Holy Scriptures.” The same writer continues : “ I fear not to add in speaking of the Venerable’s modesty, that we may say of him as was written of St. Bernard : “ so well regulated were his manner of walking, and his whole exterior, that every movement was expressive of humility, breathed piety, was a model of Christian elegance, inspiring respect, and causing a feeling of joy, in all who beheld him.” “ Tell me not of the regularity of your community,” he replied to a certain Director, “ I shall judge of that by the modesty which your Brothers observe.”

Let us now dwell for a moment on the extraordinary spirit of regularity which he manifested. As St. Augustine, quoted



in the Preface to the Rules of the Brothers, tells us : "Those who live in community should love God above all things, and next their neighbor, because whatever regularity is not founded on these two principal commandments is entirely worthless, since regular observances are established in religious communities only to enable their members to observe the Commandments of God more faithfully." We may safely say that it is regularity which directs the whole exterior man ; it is the soul and support of the religious life, to which we may apply the term *justice* as employed in the Holy Scriptures : that is, as indicative of that collection of virtues which go to make up the just man. Such is the idea which the world also has of regularity. A saint in its eyes is one who fails in no point of discipline. When we speak of a community and wish to praise its virtues, we express the whole by saying that its members, individually, and as a body, are models of regularity. This regularity is the measure of their sanctity. To appreciate the regularity of the holy Founder of the Christian Brothers, we should consider in detail the examples he gave, the lessons he taught, the zeal with which he maintained this virtue.

After referring to the regularity of life practised among the members of his own family, the first biographer of De La Salle continues : "Strict as he had been in his regularity in his own private home, he became perfect therein when he became one with his disciples of the Christian Schools. His whole study thus seemed to be to find himself first at all the exercises ; most fervent in their performance, and least considerate of the many reasons which at times would have justified his absence." Let us merely glance at the regulations he prepared for himself, and which he so faithfully carried out in every detail :

"I shall never leave the house without praying for a quarter of an hour, and examining before God whether it is absolutely necessary. If the matter be pressing, I shall take at least

the time required to recite a *Miserere*, to decide upon my course of action.

“I shall devote at least a quarter of an hour when required, to renew myself in the holy presence of God, and to consecrate myself to the Most Blessed Trinity.

“It will be a rule with me *not to make any distinction between those things which relate to my state of life and those which directly refer to my salvation*, for I may be certain that I cannot more effectively secure my eternal welfare, and that I can never reach perfection more certainly than by fulfilling the obligations of my state, provided these duties are accomplished in view of God, and to obey his holy will. I must strive ever to have these views present to my mind.

“In paying necessary visits I shall say only what is absolutely necessary : never speaking of worldly matters or useless things, and never spend more than half an hour in such visits.

“At least twenty times per day I shall unite my actions with those of Jesus Christ, and will strive to have intentions conformable to his own. To secure this practice, I will have a small piece of paper, and puncture it each time I renew the offering of my actions. For each time that I fail, I shall recite a *Pater*, kissing the floor at the beginning of each, as many times as I shall have failed, before retiring to rest.

“When consulted by my Brothers, I will beseech Our Lord to advise them. If the matter is very important, I will take time to think it over, and during my conversation I will strive to remain in constant union with our Divine Saviour.

“When my disciples acknowledge their faults, I shall look upon myself as guilty of their transgressions, by my negligence in not having foreseen and prevented them ; if I impose any penance upon them, I shall perform a more severe one myself. If the fault be serious, besides the penance, I shall take at least an hour, several days in succession, to ask pardon of God ;

for I must remember that I hold the place of Our Lord in their regard, and am bound to bear the burden of their offences, as he has borne ours : this is a duty I owe to God.

But our limits require us to be brief. In addition, let us add that when he went into the country he made at least three hours of mental prayer. "I shall trouble myself less about knowing what to do than to perfectly fulfil what I already know. When travelling (afoot) I shall visit the village churches, and if I cannot enter, shall kneel before the door.

Such is the merest synopsis of a life devoted to regularity. He learned this sublime degree of this great virtue by the constant study of the Sacred Heart of our Divine Lord, whose sole motive of action was the will of his Father in heaven. His bread, he declared, was to do that divine will ; and in dying, his last words were a declaration that in all things this will had been accomplished.

We need not enter into the details of those instructions which he gave his disciples. A few extracts from the Chapter of the Rules on REGULARITY will suffice :

"The Brothers shall then have a particular esteem for all that concerns regularity, however trifling it may appear, regarding it as being for them the principal means of sanctification, because it furnishes them with the most efficacious means of observing the commandments of God and of resisting the temptations of the devil, however violent, and because God blesses in a particular manner those who are regular.

"Regularity is the principal support of communities, and renders them impregnable while it subsists ; irregularity is the chief source of destruction and the loss of their members ; consequently the Brothers shall prefer the Rules and practices of the Institute to all other practices, *how holy soever*, unless the Commandments of God and of the Church.

"All the Brothers. . . shall make it a case of conscience if

they fail in a single point of regularity, wishing to do in all things the will of God, which is laid down in the Rules and practices of the Institute.

“The Brothers shall leave all at the first sound of the bell, in order to be present at the commencement of the exercises.

“No Brother shall exempt himself from the daily exercises—the examen, spiritual reading, mental prayer, etc., without *an evident* necessity, and the permission of the Brother Director.”

We can easily understand the influence of such a life on the world at large, and therefore will not be surprised that the Venerable servant of God had wonderful control over, and success in bringing back hardened sinners, or abandoned souls to God. Of the many instances given in his life, let us take but one as an example of his power and a proof of his zeal.

A study of this unfortunate sinner's life would, says Père Blain, be a complete history of the reign of all passions that can at the same time possess the human heart. Each vice in turn strove for the mastery; intemperance, sensuality, impurity, impiety and irreligion, were there combined in this man of sin. The name of God offended his ears; the sight of holy things threw him into a passion; to him virtue was a myth, the truths of Holy Writ so many cunningly devised fables with which to ensnare unthinking minds.

To complete his criminality of life, there remained but one precipice to fall over. This he sought by striving to force himself into holy Orders. His evil designs would have prospered had he not by his own excesses prevented their accomplishment. His talents were so great, his seeming gentleness of manner so attractive, and the position of his family such, that the Ecclesiastical authorities were on the point of admitting him into the sanctuary. He was already in the Church, among those who were to present themselves for major Orders, when, providentially, he was seized with a nervous trembling.



the result of his debaucheries, and thus warned, the bishop caused him to be driven ignominiously from the holy place. But this warning sufficed not. Deception followed deception, and shortly after, the unfortunate wretch personated the priestly character, and was several times on the point of desecrating the altar, when, by strange but doubtless providential interference he was prevented. Perhaps, says another author, "a weeping mother or a loving sister were then praying for him." Even for this sinner then, there was a final grace left. Long had he pursued his evil courses and he had now assuredly learned that "there is no peace for the wicked, for the way of the transgressor is hard." Like the prodigal son, he saw the utter baseness of the condition into which he had fallen, and listening to a warning voice, speaking perhaps for the last time, he struck his breast, and without lifting his eyes to heaven which he had voluntarily relinquished he repeatedly exclaimed: "O God, be merciful to me a sinner." His prayer was doubly heard; his task of conversion was to be rendered relatively easy by the treatment he was to receive from the man of God who was to hear the sad recital of his evil ways.

When this unfortunate man came to consider the extent of his crimes, their number, variety and enormity, he could scarcely believe that a man lived who could listen unmoved to the harrowing narrative. Here, he was mistaken; he had never learned, else he had never so offended, the depths of commiseration, the height of charity, the width of forbearance that the good God can place in the heart of a worthy confessor. This lesson he was soon to learn. After repeated search and inquiry during which he wandered over a considerable portion of France, he came to the city in which the Venerable De La Salle was temporarily stopping. As we may well imagine, who have thus far studied the life and virtues of our hero, the poor wayfarer was received with every mark of affection and sympathy. It was a

line of treatment to which he was not accustomed, for the hard and cruel doctrines and teachings of Jansenism had steeled the hearts of otherwise excellent priests against poor, relapsing sinners. During his whole life, the Venerable had been distinguished for his genial hospitality. He had already by this means converted a distinguished young Lutheran, who from admiring his host turned to studying his doctrine. This same kindly treatment was, in its own way, gradually begetting the confidence which was required in the sinner, and while thus receiving the prodigal, the Venerable was quietly studying, perhaps, as several authors declare, reading the heart of his visitor. Still the victory was neither prompt nor easy. On three different occasions did the unhappy man attempt without success, to open his heart by a humble and candid confession. Seeing that this poor soul lacked the strength necessary in so trying a case, the Venerable joins his own prayers and mortifications to those of the hesitating penitent. The result was soon seen, for the fourth time the young man succeeded in availing himself of the sacrament of penance. The Venerable listened with the utmost calm, encouraged his penitent, and only left the confessional when he had reconciled him to the Almighty. Nevertheless, the struggle was far from being ended. For months after, the devil used every artifice to again enslave the escaped soul. Through the advice and influence of M. De La Salle, the young man was admitted to the General Hospital in Soissons. There, despite every care, he gradually grew weaker, his system having been totally exhausted by his previous life. But, he saw death approaching without fear, and in his last hours constantly repeated and blessed the name of his benefactor, the Venerable De La Salle.

If this great servant of God thus attracts men, it was not certainly by any exterior finery or adornment, for his spirit of poverty led him constantly to choose all that was of least value.

His dress was of the plainest, his shoes strictly in keeping with the Rule he had given his Brothers, and his under garments frequently were such that the poorest beggar would have refused them as an alms. On one occasion being invited to sing Mass, his soutane was so threadbare that he was obliged to borrow one from a fellow priest; on another, he was obliged to accept a new mantle from a bishop who was touched with compassion at seeing his former College companion so poorly clad.

But while thus given to poverty, he was the declared enemy of filth or uncleanness. So particular was he in this respect that he made it a rule that while his Brothers should be clad like poor people, he forbade that their clothing should be either soiled or torn.

Finally, what shall we say of his obedience, for here we must stop our enumeration. Of this crowning virtue we may truly say that after the example of our Divine Lord he was obedient unto death. All through life his study was to escape dignity and to seek the last place. Repeatedly he asked his Brothers to choose another superior, and when, at length, his request was granted, he became more submissive than the youngest novice, striving to outrun all his companions in the practice of every virtue, but especially obedience. Often, as Père Blain relates, he asked and obtained permission to perform the most menial actions, greatly to the edification, but always contrary to the wishes of his children. When compelled through illness to absent himself from the ordinary exercises, he never did so without the express permission of **his** superiors, and when obliged by them to take any special treatment, his whole anxiety seemed to be to return at the earliest moment to the ordinary ways of the community. This obedience he practised, like all his other virtues, to a heroic degree. When obliged by Brother Barthelemi to visit any community, he took singular pleasure in writing letters wherein he had an opportunity to acknowledge his

dependence. Not content with this, he asked and urged to be allowed to make known his interior like the simplest member of the Order, and when spoken to on this subject or similar ones, he replied "you know that I am an inferior bound in all things by the Rule, from which I have no right to exempt myself." The great reputation he had acquired made many rich persons leave him sums to be employed either for fixed purposes, or as he might think proper. One of these legacies coming to him after his *resignation* he refused to accept it because he was spoken of in the documents as Superior, and it required a positive order to induce him to forego what his humility taught him to believe a departure from truth. As years progressed and his end drew near, his love of this virtue increased. Indeed we may truly say that it was in the practice of holy obedience he found his greatest happiness. In his contest over self, in his constant struggle after a more perfect life, he was animated by the fixed hope that being an obedient religious would enable him to speak of victory.



## CHAPTER VI.

*The Father's example followed by willing children.—First Brothers formed by De La Salle.—His own career.—A corner of the veil raised. What a glimpse revealed.—Inferences justified by indications thus found.—His passion for suffering.—Brothers Jean-Henri, Bourlette, Joseph, Louis, Stanislaus, Ireneé and Bartholomew.—Brief lives which filled many years in a few days.—Lives shortened to be the sooner with God.—Folly of the Cross.—The virtues of Thebaïd revived. Evidence of an eye-witness and Confessor.—“You do not try me; I am allowed to sink beneath the load of my crimes.”—“A loving image of the Venerable De La Salle.”—Bodily pain forgotten amid spiritual delights.—They spoke only of heaven and of the paths leading thereto.—“The Brothers’ holy passion, to follow in the footsteps of their holy Founder.”*

We cannot form a better idea of the holiness of life, the extraordinary degree of perfection to which any great servant of God, any Founder of a religious Order has attained, than by studying the lives of his first disciples. History tells us in speaking of the Venerable De La Salle that he practised all virtues to a heroic degree, and the Church of God, the infallible teacher of men has declared that what history had preserved and declared, is true. We may then truly appreciate what is written of the holy Founder by one of his most devoted children, who declares that the Brothers of the Christian Schools are “the disciples of one of the greatest lovers of the Cross of Christ who has appeared in these latter centuries.” The same writer continues: “Not content with those sent him by Providence, he so hungered after sufferings and

mortifications that we might call his path of endurance *The Way of the Cross*. We may truly say that he ever walked in this *sorrowful path* from the moment that he undertook to found the CHRISTIAN SCHOOLS till that last hour when he drank the most bitter drop which a priest can drain from the chalice of sufferings, till that final moment when he pronounced these admirable words: 'In all things I adore the will of God in my regard.'

"Nothing was wanting to bring out the resemblance borne by the Venerable De La Salle with Him who is called by the Royal Prophet *The Man of Sorrows*. His fellow-citizens, his former colleagues, nay, even his relations, could have said of him that he 'was *despised, and . . . . acquainted with infirmity, and his look was, as it were, hidden and despised, whereupon we esteemed him not.*'

"When we recall the unjust lawsuits brought against him, the condemnations pronounced against him, and then contemplate his silent resignation in these trying circumstances, we are justified in applying to him those other words, by which the same prophet speaks of the iniquitous judgments to be pronounced by the tribunals of Jerusalem: "*He shall be dumb as a lamb before his shearer, and he shall not open his mouth.*"

"Such trials and sufferings might appear not only sufficient, but even excessive to one less enamored of such things as our Venerable Founder. But, on the contrary, 'he believed that he deserved his crosses, and, seeing all creatures rising up against him, he honored them as being the instruments of divine justice, put into play to chastise a rebellious and perfidious slave.'

"In his opinion, 'these instruments of divine justice' did not exercise sufficient vengeance against one guilty of high treason, for thus he considered and spoke of himself. For this reason he imposed such rigorous chastisement upon himself that those

who knew but a small part of the truth remarked: 'Monsieur De La Salle will at the hour of death be obliged to ask pardon of his body for the excessive ill-treatment inflicted upon it.' \* \* \*

"Indeed, we cannot, without astonishment, read the résumé left us by his first historian, who tells of the holy rigors, the crucifying practices to which our Venerable Father subjected his body.

"'All that is most terrible in mortification—all that is most sensitive and bitter—could not satisfy his thirst for sufferings. Believing that he never sufficiently resembled his divine model, he each day devised some new infliction. As though his blood flowed too plentifully in his veins, he appeared anxious to exhaust its strength by cruel disciplines, which became as deeply tinged with the crimson fluid as if they had been steeped in his blood. Each day he renewed this flagellation, so resembling our Lord's till there was no part of his body which had not reason to complain of the strength and rigor of his hand. \* \* \* The cilice and hair-shirt were his ordinary garments, and thus enveloped in a garb of horse-hair, with a pointed cincture of iron, he braved the heats of summer and the biting cold of the most rigorous winters.'

"Do you wish to know how this passion for rebuffs, humiliations and sufferings was enkindled in the heart of the Venerable De La Salle? Would you learn how these kept increasing till his death, which happened on Good Friday, that the resemblance with Christ might be complete? If so, listen again to his first historian:

"'The likeness of the Crucified, bathed in blood, was the object of his constant meditations, and ever filled his mind and heart. This he took as his model, and allowed himself neither rest nor repose till it became, as it were, imbedded in his flesh. \* \* \* It was thus that he took the resolution to cease torturing his body only when that body would cease to live.' "

Indeed, nothing can better inspire and nourish the love and practice of sufferings than the contemplation of the crucifix. It recalls, with telling effect, the ignominies, the torments to which Jesus Christ subjected himself for us. "Love gives love," a philosopher has said. How, then, can we pretend to love Jesus Christ if we seek not to resemble him in the manner in which he represents himself to the looker-on of the olden dispensation, to whom he was made known as "the man who should be filled with reproaches?"

"Thus we find that the Venerable De La Salle desired the devotion to the Crucifix to be preserved as a precious legacy in our Institute. You know with what holy paucity he had determined the few things the Brothers may possess. But among these few objects he had placed 'a crucifix which will be of ebony wood and the Christ in copper.'

"He was equally desirous that practices of mortification should prevail among his children. Not content with giving us an express command to this effect, which we recite each morning in our prayer, he had also consecrated four paragraphs thereto in the treatise on the PRINCIPAL VIRTUES which the Brothers should practise. Herein he gives the motive which should induce us to follow the Apostle's advice, that we should always bear *about in our body the mortification of Jesus*. He urges us particularly to this by saying: 'Adore our Lord Jesus Christ in his condition as a penitent; let your chief care be to clothe yourself with his penitential spirit.'"

According to the Venerable De La Salle, the thought of the passion of our Lord Jesus Christ should be the daily food of our souls.

Such were the sentiments of the Venerable, such were, as we shall now see, the practices of his early disciples. Says the first historian of the Institute, the Chaplain of the Brothers at St. Yon:—



“The first disciples of the Ven. De La Salle, who were constant observers of his conduct and acts, understood that they could not be his spiritual children unless they reproduced his image within themselves, by imitating his virtues ; hence they applied themselves so earnestly thereto as to justify the adage : ‘ Such a father, such a son.’ Indeed, we find in them the thoughts, the sentiments, the supernatural views and the virtues which characterize the Venerable De La Salle. ”

“ Tradition and the biographical notices that we possess of some of these first Brothers of the Christian Schools, unite in showing them not only as docile disciples to the instructions and directions of a master to whom they were attached, but we might almost say as his emulators, whose ardor the Ven. De La Salle was often obliged to restrain lest they should go into pious excesses, especially in bodily macerations, for which he was unjustly held responsible.

“ To be convinced of this, it will suffice to recall a few of the most salient points which show us the virtues of the Ven. De La Salle reproduced with almost equal *eclat* in the greater number of those whom we count among our earliest ancestors in the Congregation.

“ We will first cite Brother Jean-Henri, who, having entered the Institute at 15, was admitted first to the Preparatory Novitiate, and made such rapid progress in all the virtues, that from the age of 17, it seems, says the author of his life, that he could add nothing to his regularity, to his mortification, and to the fervor which were admired in him. It was this which adjudged him worthy, a few years later, of being placed as Director of our Community of Rheims, when the Ven. De La Salle called Brother Henri L’ Henreux to Paris.

“ His *obedience* went so far that he would not remove a chair without permission ; this virtue shone most brilliantly, when, attacked with violent rheumatism in the hips, which prevented

him from taking a single step without the greatest suffering, he hesitated not a moment to undertake the journey from Rheims to Vaugirard, that is to say, thirty-five leagues, to make a retreat to which he was invited by the Ven. De La Salle. His companions, who were constantly obliged to help him, and even to carry him by turns, thought several times that he would expire in their arms. Indeed, he arrived more dead than alive at the end of his voyage.

“So great was his practice of the presence of God that his biographer speaks of it in these terms: ‘Brother Jean-Henri found the secret of becoming as recollected in the most distacting of his exercises as he might be at the foot of the crucifix! . . . the same *silence*, the same *vigilance over his senses*, the same *union with God*. . . . Wherever he might be, coming or going, he seemed to be in intimate communication with Him who is everywhere. His insatiable thirst for *humiliations* and *penances* induced him to accuse himself in vague terms in the accusation, not being able to particularize any real fault. The Ven. De La Salle believing him guilty, and wishing, moreover, to give him as an example to certain other brothers, imposed severe penances upon him, to be performed during supper, so that Brother Jean-Henri was seen two or three times a week taking a purely spiritual repast, instead of the corporal one, making meditation during that time, or taking the discipline.’” Such are the exact words of his biographer.

It were superfluous, after that, to speak of his piety, which, nevertheless, was made the entire subject of his mortuary notice, written by the Ven. De La Salle in these terms: “Pray for Brother Henri who died with all the sentiments of *very extraordinary piety*, the 1st of July, 1699.” What must have been the *sentiments of piety* designated as *very extraordinary* by so competent a judge!

“The virtues which distinguished Brother Jean-Henri had

equally shone in Brother Bourlette and in Brother Joseph, who succeeded each other at Laon, and there died in the odor of sanctity, the former in 1688, the latter in 1694. Brother Joseph had even some traits of resemblance with St. Cassian, one of the patrons of our Institute, inasmuch as his death was the result of a wound caused by one of his scholars.

“Brother Joseph entered the Institute in 1683, already somewhat advanced in years, and suffering from violent asthma and several other infirmities. However, he soon outstripped his companions of the Novitiate in the practice of *humility*, of *mortification* and of *piety*. He desired, and knew how to secure, the lowest employments and objects. Thus did he accomplish the precept of the Gospel : ‘*Pray always.*’ Though occupied with a thousand cares in the house, the better to fulfil them, they were performed in a spirit of meditation. He had the secret, as his biographer states, of finding God and conversing with Him. . . . He was seen joining vocal and mental prayer to recollect himself, and to sustain his attention to God always present.

Called, in 1691, to the retreat in Vaugirard, he manifested neither less *courage*, less *mortification*, nor less obedience than Brother Jean-Henri ; but, about half-way on the journey, his companions were obliged to place him in a boat, a gathering in the knee, which caused him intense torture and did not permit him to take a step without pain, prevented him from continuing his journey on foot. Still it was necessary to use violence to induce him to take passage in the boat, for he was resolved to finish the remaining twenty-two leagues on foot, *being ready to die, or to remain on the road, rather than to fail in obedience.*

“Though Brother Dominick had only passed six or seven years in the Institute, he merits equal recognition as a model of all the religious virtues. ‘He saw nothing save God present everywhere ; his days were filled with practices of *penance*, mor-



*tification, humility, obedience and charity, which virtues differed among themselves only by new degrees of fervor.*'

"Being appointed, on leaving the Novitiate, to take charge of a class of small children, and being visited by the Brother Inspector, who asked him if he experienced any difficulty, Brother Dominick responded, with a gesture of his hands, pointing to his children: '*I see nothing but God.*' The Brother Inspector withdrew, enraptured, leaving with God, him who knew how to find God in all places.

"Shortly after, he was named Sub-Director of the Novitiate, where he found Brother Hilarion his father, and two of his younger brothers, who were finishing their novitiate. His eldest brother had preceded him in the Novitiate. Such was Brother Dominick's conduct in seeking the advancement of his own father and brothers, that, his historian says, 'I know not which to admire the more. The father and the son gave examples of virtue which would have done honor to the solitaires of the Thebaid.' Their deaths were fitting crownings to their lives. Brother Dominick died a victim consumed by divine love, while his father, Brother Hilarion, finished his career during a journey of sixty-six leagues made on foot, in the midst of winter, being then more than seventy, thus dying a victim of *obedience*.

"Brother Louis showed himself a man of consummate virtue even in the Novitiate. Still, it may be said that the love of retirement was his distinctive characteristic. Named Director of Rethel, he spent twelve years there, as careful to shun the world as a Carthusian might have been. Those who had any business to transact with him found him *affable, condescending, graceful*, and of an *agreeable conversation*. Seculars respected a man they saw but seldom, and who had the appearance rather of a citizen of heaven.

"His extraordinary mortification had every reason to be satisfied. God permitted that he should be afflicted with sciatic gout



during twenty years, which rendered his life a species of purgatory. That nothing might be wanting to his sufferings, in imitation of the Ven. De Da Salle, he was placed upon a sort of framework, under which a strong fire was lighted. This allowed him to appreciate the sufferings of St. Lawrence, with this difference, that the Brother's torture was repeated several times per year. His infirmity, which would have kept any one else entire months in bed, did not prevent him once from being up with the community, nor from going to Holy Mass. Nature was affrighted, but he was deaf to her cries. Yet, a small stone coming under his foot sufficed to cause him the most acute suffering. Far from complaining, he blessed God with gratitude that He was pleased to give him a small portion of the Cross of His Son.

"From what has been said, you may easily understand, M.V. D. B., what were the other virtues of Brother Louis. He so enjoyed *the presence of God* that he was obliged to admit that distraction could not take possession of his soul. His obedience was so perfect that having exposed his difficulties and his wishes, he always concluded by saying: 'Whatever I may have said, I submit entirely to your good pleasure.' For him, his Superior's orders were the orders of God himself. The love of one's enemies and mutual forbearance were capital points for this religious. Moreover, he had the reputation of being the most skilful of consolers of the afflicted. This is what he was wont to say: 'When I am in suffering, I believe that God loves me. I am only uneasy as to God's love for me when I am without suffering.' The reputation for sanctity which he had acquired at Rethel was confirmed by the Dean of the town. When going from the sacristy to this Brother's obsequies, he said to his reverend companions: 'We are going to see the body of a saint, and the greatest saint of my parish.'

"Brother Stanislaus, who was gifted with every quality of

body, heart and mind, understood all the dangers to which such accomplishments would expose him in the world. He sought a shelter for his innocence in religion where, from the moment of his admission, he proved himself a perfect example of all virtues. 'We have, then, the right to conclude,' says his biographer, 'that to the gift of perseverance he united that of baptismal innocence.'

"In the Novitiate 'he caused his confreres to despair' of even imitating him in his acts of *mortification*. His *modesty* was such that he would not have known his companions, if his employment had not required him to fix his eyes upon those who had recourse to his services.

"As his Director at times remarked that sadness was depicted upon Brother Stanislaus' countenance, he asked the reason, and received this reply: 'You neglect me, you do not exercise me, you allow me to sink under the load of my vices.' So *simple* was he, and of so great an *openness of heart*, that his renditions were the faithful mirrors of his soul.' Faith made him to revere the Rules 'as if God had presented them written with his own hand.' We may thus judge of his *regularity*. Love of silence and recollection held his tongue, his eyes and his ears in captivity, 'so that it might be said he was thus rendered deaf, blind and mute. More than a year before his death he had acquired the almost uninterrupted presence of God, scarcely, if ever, losing sight thereof.' Shall we then be astonished that 'every place, action and position were for him suited to *prayer and meditation*?' But what shall be said of his *obedience*, unless it be 'that all in him obeyed: the mind, by renouncing all natural lights; the heart, by the sacrifice of its repugnances; the hand, by the punctual, joyous and truly reverential execution of orders which, proving replete with affection, edified and stimulated all spectators!'

"Named Director of the Novitiate opened at Avignon,

Brother Stanislaus 'seemed to have forgotten his body, to think only of the obligation under which he was confirming, by his example, the lessons which he taught on *humility, mortification* and the other virtues.' The office of Visitor, which he afterwards filled, seemed to show the Brothers of the South a *living image* of the Venerable De La Salle. The dreadful infirmity with which he was afflicted, and which tortured him for more than ten years, could not diminish his zeal, nor make him postpone rising for one minute. It finally reduced his body to what seemed a walking corpse. Finally obliged to retire, he deserved this eulogium, read in his necrological notice: 'Brother Stanislaus has died as he lived, that is, as a saint, the 4th of November.'

"The life of Brother Irenée is too well known to you, M. V. D. B., that we should here speak lengthily of him. You know how this gentleman, a brilliant officer in the army in his youth, that is till twenty-two years, was afterwards exercised by our Venerable Father, and how he attained in a short time to so high a degree of perfection that he was judged fit to fill some of the most important positions in the Institute, since he was successively Director of the Novitiate, and of the Boarding School, and First Assistant from 1725 till 1747. Though we must admit that he excelled in all virtues, it must be said that *humility* and *mortification* were the objects of his predilection. Thus did he wish to expiate the pride he had felt while in the world, in his noble extraction, and in his dress as an officer. All that could mortify his mind, or curb his body, was his greatest ambition; *obedience* alone prevented him from going to excess in this respect. The following instance will enable us to judge:"

While Director of Novices, he was sent one day to purchase provisions in the market. He took one of his Novices with him. But, before going out, he was careful to clothe himself

and his companion in a many-colored, patched garment, which was extremely old, and called for this reason 'The Robe of St. Alexis.' They patrolled the streets of Rouen, with a basket on the arm and a sack on their back. They were fully gratified, for the children and the populace followed them, shouting and insulting as they proceeded ; some even threw stones and mud. It was thus that the fervent Director taught his disciple to despise the world, and made them imitate the holy foolishness of the Cross, of which St. Francis of Assisium, St. John of God, St. Felix of Cantalice, St. Philip Neri, St. Ignatius of Loyola, and so many others, have given such sublime examples. Nevertheless, it was deemed proper to forbid him similar outings.

"So far did he carry his *mortification* in the repasts, that the superiors were obliged to command him to take the necessary nourishment for his body, against which he waged a ceaseless war. Moreover, he had always with him a provision of absynthe powder with which he sprinkled his food, after the example of the venerable Founder. His regularity was so perfect that a Brother Assistant, who had watched to detect even his least omission or negligence, declared, after a year's scrutiny, that he had not perceived him a single moment in default. *Mental prayer*, which has always been the most cherished exercise of the saints, was the delight of Brother Irenée's soul. Many traits, unintentionally allowed to escape him, prove that he had attained a high degree of contemplation. He never lost his *recollection* nor the *presence of God*, and was thus admirably disposed for divine communication.

"So far did he reform his character, naturally quick, turbulent and arrogant, that he became most *reserved*, *patient* and *amenable*.

"His obedience knew no limits, for he was wont to say : 'We are religious, but in as far as we have no will nor judgment other than the order of the Superior, *obedience* is the foundation,



the support and the spring of the religious life.' He often knelt at the feet of his Superiors, when he had to address them, and begged them to exercise him in *obedience*, without regard to his tastes, his repugnance or his ideas.

"This is what he also did to his Novices. He imposed public penances for the least delay, the least examination of an order given. 'Religion,' said he, 'being a paradise, Lucifer and the serpent, who tempted the angels and caused our first parents to fall, must be driven out—all is lost to the Institute if disobedience be not chased therefrom.'

We cannot better close these laconic remarks upon Brother Irenée than in saying with the author of the life of this virtuous Brother: 'Such was Brother Irenée; he realized in himself all that had been taught by the Holy Founder; he was the model of all virtues. Our age may therein learn that God never abandons His Church, but that at all times he favors it with men who attain the highest perfection.'

"It must not be believed that the notice we have just rapidly sketched regards Brothers who were the exception, or a few who were extraordinary as compared with others. Far from this, if we cite them, it is rather because of the positions they occupied, and the consequent influence they must have exercised. The picture which the first historian paints of the Brothers in general, proves that all those who were neither affrighted nor dejected by the sort of life established by our Venerable Founder, were worthy emulators of those about whom we have been speaking. Here is the manner in which he expresses it:

"'The children, and Brothers, studied their Father to imitate him; it was their holy passion to follow in his footsteps, even those most painful, leading to perfection. In following the thorny path traced by M. De La Salle, they came to find the cruel instruments of penance with which he tormented his

flesh. . . . They spoke only of heaven and the paths leading thereto. The language of the community savored in naught of the worldly spirit. The study of humiliation, of the abnegation of self, the despising of the world, silence, recollection, the interior spirit, retreat and solitude, the love of crosses and sufferings, were their usual occupations. To know Christ and Him crucified, to model themselves upon this exemplar, and to reproduce it in their own persons, always to bear mortification in their bodies, to become living portraits, perfect copies, this sufficed to the first Brothers—in this consisted their whole ambition.’

“ ‘So great was the spiritual fire created by the Father among his children that they could not contain themselves within the limits of ordinary fervor, they breathed God alone. Filled with a holy desire for mortification, they were happy only when allowed to give their desire full effect. . . . Yet these true children of obedience would have thought that in macerating their flesh they were doing penance for the devil, and not for God, had they practiced austerities which obedience had not sanctioned by its approbation.’ ”

Here, we stop quoting from the recital of what the Brothers were at the origin of the Institute, guided as they were by the immediate and personal direction of the Venerable De La Salle. Still we shall add a few extracts from the life of Brother Bartholomew, first successor to the holy Founder, that you may judge with what care he watched over the observance of the rule, the practices and the customs that the Founder had transmitted to him as a sacred trust, and of which the Superior-Generals, our venerated predecessors, have not shown themselves less vigilant or faithful guardians.

“Brother Bartholomew was first destined by his parents for the ecclesiastical state. Having received the tonsure and commenced the study of theology, he heard within his heart

a call, telling him that to the religious state of life did Providence reserve him. To him it seemed that no sacrifice could be too great. Hence he presented himself at the Monastery of La Trappe, then under the guidance of that celebrated reformer Abbé De Rancé, who told him that he was called to another kind of religious life.

“Learning soon after that at the gates of Paris there had been founded a new community where members received only opprobrium and contempt in return for the care bestowed upon the poorest and most abandoned of the lower classes, he was filled with joy, hoping there to find that for which his soul yearned—mortification, poverty, insults and ignominy. A secret voice said and repeated, ‘Hither, God calleth you.’

“He found the Brothers such as they had been reported. Once in the Novitiate, he became a model for all the other novices by his *fervor, mortification, regularity, silence, recollection, mildness* and the fidelity with which he followed the counsels of his superiors.

“The docility with which he submitted to direction, the complete openness of heart which he manifested, were to him of the greatest assistance against the prolonged and dreadful assaults he had to encounter.

“The devil believing how much depended upon the perseverance of Brother Bartholomew, and how much good was to be realized by this religious for the new Institute, became enraged against him. It is impossible otherwise to explain the nature and intensity of the temptations endured by this Brother, despite the macerations, humiliations and the fervent prayers to which he had recourse.

“Finally, to remove every chance of attack, he spontaneously made the irrevocable vow of stability in the Institute, adding thereto those of obedience and perpetual chastity.

“He soon had reason to flatter himself upon the steps taken.



His father dying shortly after, Brother Bartholomew was urgently demanded by his mother, then in straightened circumstances, to become her support, as indispensable in her old age. But on explaining to her the obligations which bound him to the congregation, he proved to her that he no longer belonged to his family, nor to himself, but to God alone, to whom he had consecrated himself entirely and without reserve."

It would be superfluous to speak of the daily progress Brother Bartholomew made in all virtues since the Ven. De La Salle, who had trained him and knew him intimately, chose him first to replace him as Director of Novices, and then at the head of the community. Finally, he left him in Paris, while he went to visit some houses in Provence. The prudent founder desired, in this species of retreat, to give a certain satisfaction to his enemies, hoping thus to procure the calm and peace then greatly needed by the Institute.

Elected to succeed the Venerable Founder, when the latter had obliged the Brothers to accept his resignation, Brother Bartholomew had to govern the Institute in times so critical that they seemed to have been announced by the Apostle of Nations, when he says: "In the last times, some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to spirits of error and doctrines of devils, speaking lies in hypocrisy, and having their consciences seared." Jansenism then ravaged certain parts of France, in which the Brothers were established, and had even taken power into its own hands in some localities. This statement will suffice to make known the firmness in *faith*, joined with the *sweetness* and *prudence*, needed by Brother Bartholomew to succeed as he did in preserving his inferiors from the contagion, without giving any pretext to the adherents of the new errors to close the Christian schools. Without entering into irritating or sterile discussions, the prudent superior was content with



often saying to his Brothers : " Let us observe the last instructions of our Venerable Father. For my part, I thank God that He gave me to be born of excellent catholics, and that He has given me so great an aversion for all new doctrines." Moreover, he recommended nothing so strongly as the spirit of faith. In all his letters he returned to the subject ; " Endeavor always to be governed by the views of faith. . . . Look upon crosses with the eyes of faith, and they will appear to you as presents from heaven. . . . Above all, act only through motives of faith. . . . I exhort and beseech you with all my heart that you be conducted in all your actions only by views of faith. . . . It suffices not to have commenced to enter into the spirit of faith, you must afterwards live and act only through this spirit." Thus, *in and out of season*, did he exhort the Brothers to be very exact : First, " to keep that which is committed to thy trust, avoiding the profane novelties of words, and oppositions of knowledge, falsely so called." Secondly, to animate all their actions by the spirit of faith, which is the spirit of the Institute."

We must renounce speaking longer, M. V. D. B., of the lessons and examples of all the virtues furnished us by this first successor of the founder of our Institute. Time fails us. Brother Bartholomew was, according to the declaration of the venerable first historian, the most attached child of his Venerated father, the most submissive disciple of this great master in the spiritual life, and the *most perfect image of the holy Founder*.

His death which, though he had foreseen it, seemed not so near, prevented him from having a final trait of resemblance with his beloved father in God. Like the Ven. De La Salle, he sighed for the time when he might place the burden of governing in other hands ; it was only into the hands of the Sovereign Judge that he could place his withdrawal. Happily, he had been "*the faithful and wise steward whom his lord setteth over his*

*family to give them their measure of wheat in due season,"* and he was found in the exact accomplishment of his duties. Doubtless, as a consequence of this fidelity, he heard the consoling words : "*Well done, good and faithful servant, because thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will place thee over many things ; enter thou into the joy of our Lord.*" He was interred beside the tomb of the Venerable De La Salle. Providence thus wished to reunite after death, two men who had been so closely allied in life.

"The generalship of Brother Bartholomew lasted but three years ; but this short period was hedged with difficulties and filled with most painful anxieties. At certain moments, the attack seemed directed against several of our houses at the same time. The rudest shocks came at times from those who should have been the greatest protectors of the Brothers ; but Providence proved that, from that moment he watched over our Institute, which, being closely united to the chair of Peter, shares its destinies, which are to be frequently buffeted by the storm, but never to be submerged.

"It will ever be thus, so long as the Brothers follow the lessons and examples of their Venerable Father and of his first disciples ; so long as the SPIRIT OF FAITH shall remain in the SOUL OF THE BODY OF THIS INSTITUTE."

## CHAPTER VII.

*Vocation.—Call to the Institute of the Brothers of the Christian Schools.—Remembrance of the lives read in previous Chapter.—Doctrine of the Saints, especially Sts. Thomas Aquinas and Liguori on the vocation to the Religious State.—Special Excellence of the Christian Teacher's vocation.—Objections to following an early call to the religious life.—Dangers of delay.—Exposure to sin.—Who should encourage youth to serve God in the life and work of a Brother of the Christian Schools?—False prophets sometimes unfortunately found even in God's holy service!—Value placed upon the Brother's life and work, by his Eminence, the Cardinal Archbishop of New York; other expressions of esteem by Most Rev'd and Right Rev'd Bishops. Words of Mgr. de Ségur.—“The blind man who sees well.”—A parting word to Catholic Youth.*

Young reader, what think you of such lives as these? What a grace to have been called to follow such a course, to do good to men, by seeking the welfare of the dearest portion of Christ's flock! Again, how consoling the thought, the assurance, that such lives were not exceptions; that in every day and in every hour, similar examples were furnished by Brothers in every community. Does this not show that these good, holy young men, for most of them were not old, found the yoke of the Lord sweet, his burden light? Truly, does it not strike you that they received the hundred-fold promised, even in this life, to those who leave father and mother, brother and sister for the sake of Christ? What else than God's all-powerful grace could enable the good Brother who had two classes and a sick companion to mind, to say in a playful way: “Why, I have one foot in my own

class, the other in my companion's, my heart is with the sick Brother, and my soul in heaven!" What faith in good Brother Timothy, who could say: "Father, bless my swollen knee, and I shall walk," and who, after the blessing, started on a prolonged journey afoot, perfectly healed! What love of the cross must have been Brother Irenée's, who scourged his body till blood flowed copiously, to enable his companions, or rather his novices, to overcome their own flesh! Must not the good God have looked down upon and spoken of such fervent disciples as "beloved sons in whom He was well pleased?" Yet such is the life led, such the career pursued by every worthy child of the Venerable De La Salle. Such is the life to which your own teachers daily devote themselves. It may not appear so, but remember that "all the beauty of the King's 'children' is from within." The most austere followers of Christ show least traces of their mortification. St Francis de Sales when twitted by a thoughtless person on the fine quality of his episcopal dress, invited his critic to a private room, and having first playfully asked the fault-finder to show what kind of under-dress he wore, quietly opened the front of his own gown and showed the hair-shirt beneath. While young saints waited upon their lord at court, in the most costly garb, their bodies were tortured by a heavy cincture of iron, and many queens and kings, 'neath their robes of state, have worn the most trying instruments of penance. Again, what more glorious work, what more useful to mankind can be followed, than that which was pursued by our Divine Lord himself, when he called little children unto him! What more touching than a mission which resembles that of St. Francis Xavier who hastened from street to street ringing a little bell, calling children to teach them the fear of the Lord! What more noble calling than that which the Church declares to be of the highest importance, essential to her welfare, and the salvation of her children.—Listen to the voices of our bishops. Hear the



will of God, as made known in the decrees of the last meeting of the hierarchy of the Province of New York :

Does not your heart lean towards a state, whose mission, the late illustrious Cardinal Archbishop of Malines (Belgium) declared to be more needed now than at any previous time? What of that high calling whose work it is to sculpture living angels from out the block of human nature, presented by every child who enters a Christian School? Can you imagine a cause more worthy of your highest ambition than to raise up for God and society a Christian offspring, which "can only be secured by a Christian education." Remember that "Christian virtues do not grow spontaneously in the soul. They are the result of careful and constant culture; and this must begin in early childhood." Can you ask any grander field than that in which the harvest is great, but the laborers few? What more lasting source of gratitude can you offer the world, society at large, than that which you would be entitled to claim by joining a body to whom is confided "the wonderful privilege of training immortal souls to fulfil the duties assigned them by their heavenly Father, that they may receive from his hands an eternal crown in Heaven." . . . In such a calling, it will be yours to take the same care of children "that a skilful gardener would take of delicate flowers which he knows are highly prized by his master. If it becomes the imperative duty of parents "to send their children to Christian Schools" surely it must be the imperative duty of others to take upon themselves the task of governing and teaching these pupils. "The question of religious education is the paramount question of the day, in the solution of which, our destiny as a Christian people must depend," so declare the highest authorities in the Catholic Church in our land. Is there anything which you, youthful reader, can imagine as higher or more ennobling than to pursue a vocation which tends to realize the hopes and wishes,

the prayers and the commands of prelates alike distinguished for their piety, learning and zeal? Think for a moment of what it is to take part in opening and maintaining Christian Schools, whose mission is pointed out so forcibly by the same high authority: "The Catholic school sows the good seed in the hearts of children, to bear in after years glorious fruits for our country and our Religion" . . . . in these schools your children may learn . . . all that will make them hereafter loyal citizens of their country, and valiant soldiers of Christ and his holy Church. By these schools the efforts of infidelity will be rendered abortive: by them will Religion be fortified; by them will your Pastors be able to repeat the touching words of the Divine Master: "Father, those whom thou gavest me I have kept, and not one of them is lost."

In so important a question as that of religious vocation, it is of the greatest moment to understand the subject fully, and earnestly to pray God to give us strength to follow, when he makes known his divine will. "It is certain that each child has a vocation," says Mgr. Dupanloup, in his work upon "The child." "*It is a grave error to suppose that few are now called to the religious life;*" says Mgr. de Ségur. "The Gospel was written to suit all times and people; it is to these that our Lord constantly holds out the invitation: '*If thou wilt be perfect, go sell what thou hast, give it to the poor, and then follow me.*' . . . Surely if the state of perfection is not to be the portion of all men, they should at least desire it! Can we imagine that the Almighty would wish to exclude any one from a state in which fewest obstacles are met, and in which we may find the greatest number of means whereby to attain our end, the eternal salvation of our immortal souls? Let us recall the happy assurance given by Our Divine Lord, *Many are called, and dread that, through their own fault, so few are chosen.* If we except rare cases in which social position requires persons

to remain in the world, or where the absolute duties of family restrain, the generality of the faithful may choose the religious life ; though among all these there may be but a limited number, who are so directly called, that their salvation would be very dangerously imperilled by resisting the invitation.

Sts. Thomas and Liguori teach this doctrine, which is concurred in by the unanimous voice of the holy writers. Vocations are not wanting where faith and piety still flourish ; the Almighty reserves to himself many chosen ones who will save their own souls and the souls of their brethren.

To choose well, we must know and consider the end for which we have been created. Our choice must tend to realize this object or end. The more fully to impress the importance of this choice upon our mind, let us remember that it is a question of salvation, the most important of all affairs. A good choice gives every reason to hope for salvation ; he who refuses to choose well exposes himself greatly to the danger of being damned.

Are you talented? Then, be doubly careful in your choice. Providence has given you these talents to be employed in the service of God, and you are under the greater obligation to choose well. In this way will you make the most use of your talents.

If you are quite young, this is not an obstacle to making a good choice. Many of the greatest saints have given themselves to God almost from the cradle. Abundant fruits are destined for those who thus choose in time. Does grace call thus early? Know then the great dangers of those who delay their choice.

Strive earnestly to acquire those dispositions which assist one to make a good choice. Remove all that may prove an obstacle to your calling. Determine upon some acts of piety and religion which you will perform to obtain the grace of making a good choice. Listen to your Confessor, be guided by



his prudent counsels. Be sure to follow a daily regulation, approved of by some pious person in whom you have confidence. Be not impatient if you still commit many faults. Perhaps you need the graces of a higher state to keep you in the straight and narrow path.

Be not deceived ; making your choice, and leaving the world, are different things. Do not allow human motives, family interests, to interfere with your choice. Cast worldly hopes and prospects aside. To choose well, compare the perishable present with the eternal future. Listen to, study, and be directed by, the gospel maxims and the sayings and examples of the saints. Beware of counsellors ; no person can choose well with a bad adviser. In all your efforts, remember that prayer is the key that opens the treasury of divine wisdom. Often read the lives of those who have chosen well ; be encouraged by the power of their example, and follow the good inspirations resulting therefrom.

Besides consoling yourself by such encouraging motives as those just given, recall the fact that those ungrateful persons who obstinately resist the call of God, are in the end deprived of His graces. Bring to mind the terrible punishments inflicted on those who do not obey God. Strive to form an exact idea of the secular state with all its trials, dangers and transitory rewards and gratifications. Then, form an equally exact idea of the religious state. Study and strive to appreciate the nine fruits of the Religious Life, attributed to St. Bernard, and in which that great doctor and saint of the Church shows how man in holy religion :

1. Lives more purely ; 2. Falls more rarely ; 3. Rises more promptly ; 4. Is bedewed by the waters of grace more frequently ; 5. Passes his life more holily ; 6. Reposes more securely ; 7. Dies more confidently ; 8. Is released more promptly ; 9. Is rewarded more abundantly.



Such considerations will make you feel the beauty, the loveliness, the worth of the religious state. Bear in mind, youthful reader, it is not a question of greater or lesser good, it is one of salvation. Without following your vocation there is a *possibility* but only a possibility of salvation.

The world hungers for the bread of life ; children in multitudes ask for teachers who will break to them the staff of the word of truth, the saving doctrine of Mother Church. Who, called by the divine voice, can refuse ? Who, with heart beating responsively to the higher and nobler aspirations of Christian heroism, will say "No !" when called upon by the Almighty, in words which conscience hears and heart feels, to labor in that grand field, the noblest, the highest, the most acceptable to Mother Church and therefore to God, the work of Christian education, "the great question of the hour."

Stay, youthful reader, before going farther in your reading ; offer up a fervent prayer to know whether such is not *your calling* ; and if such be the case, thank the good God ; praise Mary Immaculate through whom this grace has been given you ; and when, in the happy moment of the accomplishment of your vocation, you are vested in the habit of the Brother of the Christian Schools, say, "To God, from whom all blessings flow, be praise !" Thanked be Mary, who has led me to the foot of the altar of sacrifice, where I can best secure the interests of Jesus, the Saviour of men ; grateful offerings be made to my dear angel-guardian who "from unrighteous ways hath saved, lest in error's paths we stray."

Yes, youthful reader, such a vocation is one which will give heaven cause to rejoice, not that the one sinner has been converted, but that there has been joined to the army of Christian teachers another worker who will not only teach and direct the ninety-nine who need not penance, but also save the hundredth who has fallen away.

Does not such a mission inspire you? Can you think of the good to be done and yet remain callous? No; such is not the character of the truly Catholic Christian boy. His is a noble disposition, a willing heart, a generous soul—such is yours, youthful reader, if, called by the good God, you put your hand generously to the plough and never turn back, thus proving yourself “worthy of the Kingdom of Heaven.”

What more glorious task; for two hundred and more years, thousands of Brothers of the Christian Schools have devoted themselves to the cause of Christian education. In all that time heaven has been peopled by the souls saved through Christian religious teachings. Now is the day, now the hour, when more gleaners are called into the vineyard where “the harvest is great, the laborers few.” Will you listen to the voice of grace, the call of God? If so, blessed indeed is your lot, for “of such is the Kingdom of Heaven.”

You may hear it said even by well-meaning people that “IT IS AS WELL TO REMAIN IN THE WORLD AS TO ENTER RELIGION.” Yet all the Fathers and Doctors of the Church teach the contrary. St. Thomas says that “entering into the religious state is so meritorious that it remits all one’s sins.” . . . . . “If” says the Angel of the Schools, “a few alms suffice to redeem one’s faults before God . . . . . with how much greater reason may we count upon the satisfaction made for his sins by him who gives himself entirely to God by entering into the religious state . . . . .” “We read in the lives of the Fathers that when we embrace the religious state, we obtain a grace similar to that of baptism.” St. Alphonsus Liguori teaches a like doctrine. And what of the happiness enjoyed by those who have embraced a religious life? St. Liguori quoting St. Scholastica says: “If men understood the happiness of the monastic life, the whole world would soon become a convent.” St. Mary Magdalene de Pazzi added that, with such knowledge, “Men would scale the monastic

walls to secure admission." The blessed 'Seraphine d'Ascoli' declared that he "would not give one leaf of his palm-belt for all the kingdoms of the world."

But, you may hear it urged. . . . . "TIME ENOUGH; NO NEED OF SUCH HASTE; BE PRUDENT, IT IS NOT WISE TO ENTER RELIGION TOO EARLY." . Many pretend that youth requires "to see for itself." "Wait" say they, "till your ideas are fixed; it is better not to have occasion to regret the engagements we have made." Again, St. Thomas comes to solve and refute this difficulty. "It is not only permitted," he says, "but it is even expedient to abandon the world from our earliest years, to live in the seclusion of the religious life."

In treating of those who have entered religion at an early day, St. Anselm compares them to angels . . . . . Is it not usual to employ children in those delicate arts in which they are to spend their lives. Those who are to become ecclesiastics are trained thereto from their earliest years. Those who embrace the military career, begin young; apprentices begin at an early age to master the secrets of their trade. Why should not this rule apply to such as wish to become religious? . . . . .

"SO SERIOUS A RESOLUTION SHOULD ONLY BE TAKEN AFTER LENGTHY AND MATURE DELIBERATION."

So say those who object to youth entering religion. St. Thomas, again, refutes this assertion by declaring that prolonged deliberation is needed and the advice of many secured when the question is very doubtful, but when things are certain and manifest, it is not necessary to obtain such counsel. Now, when entrance into religion is concerned, we may be sure that the act in itself is better than to remain in the world. He who doubts this, questions what our Lord himself counsels. "Hasten," says St. Jerome, "hasten, I beseech thee: cut the rope which holds the boat to the shore, rather than lose time in untying it." As cited by the Doctors of the Church, let us remember



the examples of Sts. James and John, St. Matthew and the prophet Eliseus, who at once left all things to follow the divine call. In commenting upon these words of our Lord : "*Follow me, let the dead bury their dead,*" a holy writer remarks : "Jesus Christ speaks not thus that we may despise and make little of the love which we owe our parents, but to show that nothing must be preferred to the affairs of heaven, and that even when urged by most enticing natural motives, we should not lightly defer our decision. You may ask what is more necessary than to bury one's father? What more easy? But little time was required for this! Yet the devil in all these cases seeks some loophole by which to introduce his temptations. Hence Holy Writ instructs us not to defer from day to day. . . . All of which tell us to prefer spiritual things to all else, even those which appear most necessary. If the Lord finds fault with those who asked time to comply with a duty so seemingly necessary as the burial of a father, what will be his treatment of those who pretend that they require much time in which to study whether they will follow his counsels? . . . ."

Others tell us that : "WE MUST MOST CAREFULLY EXAMINE IF THE VOCATION IS TRULY FROM GOD."

"St. Thomas treating of this, quotes St. John, who writes :

'Believe not in every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God.' He then answers his own objection :

These words *try the spirits* refer to things doubtful in themselves—in which the spirit of God is not clearly visible. Thus, those who are already in religion may doubt whether they who present themselves for admission are impelled by a proper spirit or are actuated by a good motive. Hence they may and should test applicants to discover their motives of action. But, he who feels himself called to enter religion has no reason to doubt that his inspiration is from above. . . . The Angelic Doctor still further argues : "May not the devil transform himself into



an angel of light?" To this he replies: "This is true, yet, supposing that the devil urged anyone to enter into religion, this would be a good work, and conformable to what angels of light perform. There is, therefore, no danger in following this inspiration. . . . The Almighty often employs the malice of the devil to labor for the salvation of souls."

"All this is true," I hear some would-be-wise neighbor say, who has been let into the secret of your intended entrance into the religious life; but, once more:

"THERE IS NO HURRY, THERE WILL ALWAYS BE TIME ENOUGH TO ENTER." . . . St. Liguori is of quite a different opinion, and declares that as soon as the Lord calls any one to a perfect state, he who is thus favored should respond at once, unless he wishes to endanger his eternal salvation. Otherwise, our Divine Lord would reproach him as he did the rich man in the gospel, who, when invited to follow Christ, asked time first to go and sell his goods and to put his affairs in order, and to whom our Saviour replied: "*He who puts his hand to the plough and then looks back, is not fit for the kingdom of heaven.*" The divine grace with which our minds are enlightened is transitory, not permanent; which made St. Thomas say that, when these holy solicitations call to a more perfect life, we should hasten to follow them without delay. How surprising is the conduct of the world in this respect! Where there is a question of giving one's self to God, no amount of delay is too great, we cannot be too slow in reaching a decision; whereas, when the service of the world is at stake, when we are asked to enter its ranks and assume the dread responsibilities which its service involves, we may act with all possible despatch. According to them, God must wait, while the world demands prompt and ample service. Yet we have the words of our Divine Lord himself assuring us of the contrary. "My yoke is sweet, my burden light," he tells us, and to make it still more attractive, to the promise of eternal life in the next.

he guarantees a hundred-fold in houses, lands, brothers, sisters and all kindred joys and privileges here below. Those who will read Rodriguez's beautiful and touching chapters on this subject in his "Religious Perfection" will require no further discussion of the subject.

To the objections already cited and refuted must be added the world's final argument, in which they sum up all the force and cunning left in their store-house of reasons, why the good God should not be served unreservedly. They declare that "AFTER ALL, THE RELIGIOUS VOCATION IS A MERE MATTER OF COUNSEL ; WE ARE NOT BOUND TO FOLLOW IT." To this, St. Liguori answers : " People of the world make no scruple of telling young persons called to the religious life that they can serve God in every state, even in the midst of the world. What is most surprising is that such thoughts are expressed by religious and even by priests. . . . Yes, it is quite true that we can serve God in every place, when we are not called to the religious state : but not when we are called, and that we wish to please our own fancy by remaining in the world. In this latter case it is difficult to live well and to serve God." (See "Choice of a State of Life.")

In his Moral Theology, the same saint proposes this question :

"When we are called to serve God in religion, is it a sin, and what sin is it, to abandon one's vocation ? "

To neglect a religious vocation is not, in itself, a sin, for what is merely counselled does not, of itself, oblige under pain of sin. Yet, owing to the danger to which our eternal salvation is exposed, when we choose a state of life outside of what the divine will indicates, he may not be excused from some sin who is unfaithful to his vocation. If, owing to his weakness, of which he has had experience, anyone finds that his salvation is seriously exposed, that he is likely to lose his soul by depriving himself of the assistance which he would find in the religious

state, *such a person cannot be excused from the guilt of mortal sin*, who, despite this knowledge, refuses to comply with the call of God's holy will to enter a religious community. St. Gregory the Great declares that "many can attain eternal salvation only by totally abandoning all things."

According to the generally received opinion of the Doctors of the Church, *it is a mortal sin to dissuade any one from entering the religious state, who is called thereto. . . . .* If this be a mortal sin, it is hard to find how it can be a lesser sin for one to cause himself similar injury.

Let us remember the remarkable words of St. Bernard, who, in speaking of the world and its dangers, says: Therein "chastity is threatened amid delights; humility among riches; piety by the multiplicity of worldly things; truth in the midst of many words; charity in the turmoil of a perverse age. Fly, hasten from the midst of this Babylon, and save your souls!"

And now, having shown how serious a matter it is to tamper with a religious vocation, how strong the inducements to follow the divine call when made known, how difficult to reach the golden gate by any other road than that which Divine Providence calls his chosen ones to walk in, let us ask:

"WHO SHOULD ENCOURAGE, DEVELOPE AND FOSTER RELIGIOUS VOCATIONS?"

We might answer that the entire world owes it to itself to furnish a large number who will walk in the straight and narrow way; souls that may, as beautifully expressed, become so many lightning rods to carry off the shafts of divine vengeance; souls that will, more fortunately than in days of old, be more than ten just men in number, and thus save the city, the world and its sinful people. But let us become more practical by being direct in our appeal. Who, ask we, should encourage religious vocations? We answer:

*Every family, but especially, every mother, every father, every*

*priest*, every *teacher*, and finally every *Christian*, zealous for God's glory and for the salvation of souls.

Every Catholic mother should take delight in offering at least one of her sons as an apostle in a work so dear to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, so highly prized by holy Mother Church, so essential to the welfare of society at large. A son thus consecrated to all that is noblest on earth, and occupied in the art of arts, the government of the future men of our land,—such a son will surely be a jewel which, like the matron of olden Rome, she may present to friends and neighbors as the brightest gem to be placed in her crown. When the mother who voluntarily has consecrated her offspring on the altar of Catholic education, comes to render an account of her stewardship, with what well-founded hope she may present herself before her Judge to whom she will have given, not the cup of cold water, not even wealth and riches, nor fame and renown, but what is nearer and dearer to her than all this,—the fruit of her womb, this fruit thrice blessed in the mission it has embraced, the work it has thus accomplished, the happy results which have been its issue ; which results rise to the throne of grace like sweet incense, wafting prayer to Him who is never outdone in generosity, who, as he went through the streets of his native land, called to him the little ones who were, later, to be of the kingdom of heaven,—his newly founded Church here below, his eternal mansion in which they who shall have taught many unto justice shall shine as stars for all eternity.

Youthful reader ! What greater happiness can you wish for that loving mother to whom you are so fondly attached ? Join with her, then, in asking the Divine Child who daily grew in wisdom, age and grace, to lead you in the path in which he wishes you to walk. Ask him, if it be the will of heaven, to make you one of those who must help to fill the many places made void by angels' first and only sin ; places that can only be



filled by teaching the coming generations the beauty, the worth, the loveliness of the service of God. To secure this, let her ask that, here below, they may embrace that state which will enable them to save the souls of their brethren, and thus save their own souls, and cover a multitude of sins.

And you, christian father! What say you to such a vocation? You have felt the hard strokes of the world's ingratitude: you have labored all through the night of life, often catching nothing, having no other reward to look forward to, save that which is due to your good intentions. Do you not wish your son, if it be God's holy will, to avoid those hard struggles, to escape those severe checks, which only your Catholic faith or christian fortitude have enabled you to endure or overcome? If so, pray that he may be called into the path which, while filled with the thorns of mortification and self-denial, is strewn with the roses of real success; a path which, however rugged, leads to your and their true home; where father and son will unceasingly sing the praises of the good God who will have crowned the father because of his sacrifice, the son, because having put his hand to the plough he has never taken his hand therefrom, never looked back, thus proving himself fit for the kingdom of heaven.

And shall not the Reverend Clergy, first in every good cause, give a helping hand, speak an encouraging word, where the germs of a vocation appear, or that indications lead to suspect its existence? Who better than the priest knows the value of the religious school; the importance of having teachers whose whole life is exclusively devoted to so noble a cause? But we shall not urge the question with those devoted ministers of Christ. The words of their own Most Reverend and Right Reverend prelates will be the fittest form of appeal. Says his Eminence, the Most Rev. Cardinal Archbishop of New York, who has always been most interested in the work of the Brothers:

“As it may often be in the power of Pastors or Confessors to foster and encourage vocations to a life so eminently useful and meritorious as is that of the Christian Brothers, or to recommend fitting subjects for their Novitiate, I am induced to solicit the aid of their influence in this direction, that thus the religious training and education of catholic children may be more effectually promoted and secured.” To this, the Most Rev. Coadjutor’s lines, written when directing the See of Newark, may fittingly be added :

“I beg to recommend to you the fostering of vocations for this admirable Institution from which so many benefits accrue to youth, and from which, if vocations be multiplied, we may hope so much more in future for the welfare of religion.”

In language inspired by his zeal for the little ones of his fold the Most Rev. Archbishop of Baltimore also says :

“You are thoroughly convinced of the necessity of a Christian education. It is the only guardian and preservative of the faith of the rising generation. For this reason, the vocations of religious teachers are to be encouraged. Their increase depends, in a great measure, upon you, whose office it is to study the dispositions of youth, and who have the faculty to distinguish those whom Providence seems to call to the noble life of the Christian teacher.

“I bless this work (the new Novitiate of Baltimore) with all my heart, and hope that the Rev’d Clergy will exercise their solicitude in encouraging vocations to the Institute of the Brothers of the Christian Schools.”

JAMES GIBBONS, Abp. Baltimore.

These might suffice, but let us listen to voices hushed in death, and whose works speak after them. Thus wrote the illustrious Abp. Spalding :

“I beg to enlist your zeal in behalf of the Christian Brothers who are doing so much towards advancing the cause of Cath-

olic Education in this country. As the sphere of their action extends, they necessarily need a large increase in their numbers. Hence I invite you to take an interest in finding suitable candidates for their Novitiate in New York."

And Most Rev. Abp. Wood, during whose administration so many schools and communities of Christian Brothers were opened, wrote: "You will thus, by securing vocations, greatly advance the interests of religion and education," since, says the Cardinal Abp. of Malines (Belgium), "the Brothers have never been so much needed as at present."

"Let us again say what we have so often urged; never has the harvest been greater; never have the Brothers been called upon to open so many establishments; never has it been within the power of the priest to encourage the work of securing vocations to greater advantage. Let it not be said that the number of vocations is becoming smaller. In the midst of the many souls of your parish, prayer and a conscientious search will discover more than one on whom the Almighty has merciful designs, more than one who is called to join in carrying out the work which is the most essential in the Church. To the priesthood is society indebted for civilization; through those zealous priests who will secure subjects to direct and teach Christian Schools shall civilization be preserved. Without such assistance the world would again become barbarian." Such are the words and wishes of the late tireless champion of the Church and her rights, Mgr. de Ségur, that extraordinary old man of whom Pius IX said, "he is a blind man who sees wonderfully well."

Need we say anything to the Christian religious teacher to induce him to manifest his zeal in a cause to which he has devoted his own life and talents? If we must, let it be in the language of the Superior General of the most widely spread Institute of religious teachers in the Christian world:

“The formation of teachers commences among the children of our establishments, for, hereafter, we must look almost exclusively to our schools as the nurseries in which we will secure postulants for our novitiates. We deem it superfluous to give any reason here, for our convictions ; they are as numerous as they are peremptory ; if required, the reader would find no difficulty in stating these reasons himself.

“ . . . We may say with all exactness that a good pupil from our classes is already half formed to become an excellent professor in the Christian Schools.

“But if schools are to become nurseries for postulants, piety must not only be held in honor, but it must likewise be cultivated with zeal and method, particularly among the more fervent pupils, for, it is among these last that vocations to our novitiates must be developed.

“Piety, like all other virtues, resembles a talent for any special art, which is developed and perfected by repeated acts. Pious practices adopted by particular pupils will best conduce to warm and nourish their piety. . . It is by pious associations, wisely and methodically directed, such as the Apostolate of Prayer, the Living Rosary, that you will see an end of the sterility of religious vocations in your classes, and which will be replaced by a fecundity in keeping with the requirements caused by deaths in our ranks, and by the needs of the Church, now calling loudly for the establishment of many Christian Schools.

“Finally, to secure vocations among pupils, they must be persuaded that their teacher is a saint.” It is related by the author of the late Very Rev. Brother Philippe’s life that his pupils were in the habit of kissing his robe when unseen ! Needless to say that a very large number of his boys followed their master’s example and entered the Institute of which he afterwards became the General ! “When he sang that grand old hymn ‘ Yes, Heaven is the Prize ! ’ wrote one of his pupils,



now an aged and saintly priest, our hearts were inflamed with love, and many declared that heaven must be a beautiful place if the angels and saints loved God and sang His praises better than Brother Philippe!

With saintly masters, vocations will be numerous; without piety, the blind will be leading the blind, not to the "Land of Promise," the harbor of the religious life, but to the ditch of sin and sorrow, whence nothing but a most powerful grace will extricate either the leader or those who follow.

In conclusion, let us often unite with all the fervor we can command, in asking the good God to raise the veil, to make known the worth and wealth of that field in which "the harvest is great, the laborers few."

## CHAPTER VIII.

*The power of prayer.—Great is God in his saints.—The prayer of faith saves afflicted humanity.—The evidence required to constitute a miracle acknowledged.—De La Salle favors the poor.—“I am John Baptist De La Salle.”—Where Doctors fail, a relic cures.—A happy family united after many years, at the Holy Table.—Another evidence of De La Salle’s influence with God.—After years of suffering, instantly relieved.—The value of good books well distributed.—A youthful nephew brings the remedy.—“The True Friend of Youth.” Confidence at the recital of others’ favors.—A moment’s prayer cures a life of pain.—America likewise favored.—Influence of De La Salle’s power at our doors.—“It is impossible for me to be mistaken.—I am positive.—The child must die.—The disease is incurable.”—The boy is cured.—A good promise.—Shall he be alone in giving himself to God?—“The harvest is great, the laborers few.”*

Great is the power of God as manifested in his saints. In few cases has this power been more forcibly seen than in the cures effected through the Venerable servant of God, John Baptist De La Salle. We select the following from a mass of evidence and a large number of equally authenticated miraculous occurrences.

In the city of Orleans, France, in the year 1832, Miss Victoire Ferry was acting as nurse in the general hospital for the insane. One day while walking in the halls of the institution, she was suddenly attacked by a violent patient and kicked with such severity that she must have been killed had not two other

patients come to her assistance. She was carried to her room unconscious and shortly after, blood flowed copiously from her mouth, ears and nostrils. She trembled convulsively, and all indications pointed to a complete internal disorganization. Ordinary remedies proving of no avail, Dr. Vallet was called in and declared that serious injury had been received in the region of the heart. He prescribed bleeding, leechings and various medicines. For two years, this course was pursued, without avail; she was unable to work, lost her sleep and became greatly emaciated. To meet the new developments in her case, blisters were prescribed, cauteries were placed in each arm, yet no relief came. To intensify her case, vomitings of blood became frequent. Finally she was unable to walk or even to stand, and had to remain either in bed or seated in a reclining chair. Thus, for twelve years did she suffer, while, for the last eight, the symptoms had been alarming. Fever seldom left her; she swallowed food with great difficulty, and drink of the simplest kinds produced vomiting. During this prolonged illness she was bled two hundred and twelve times, and over one hundred useless attempts had been made to bleed her. Her first medical attendant (Dr. Vallet) had long since given up her case, but, in 1839, another physician attended her for two or three months without giving any hopes of relief, as the principal organs, and especially the heart, having been affected for several years, a remedy was physically impossible. She frequently swooned away in her mother's arms, and so great was the swelling in her body that when touched, the mark of the fingers remained on the flesh.

Man had done all in his power, and Miss Ferry now had recourse to our Blessed Lady and her favorite saints. But God's designs were to be realized. It was left to the Venerable De La Salle to manifest his power in this extraordinary case.

Having learned that this great servant of God had obtained

many extraordinary cures for his devout clients, Miss Ferry began to invoke him on the 18th of May, 1844. The Brothers of the Christian Schools of Orleans united with her in the novena she began on that day. Holding in her hand a picture and relic of the Venerable she said :

“ Good Father : Venerable servant of God, John Baptist De La Salle, pray for me who have recourse to thee. If it be God’s holy will, obtain my cure. If, on the contrary, I am to die, willingly do I resign myself, that my soul may be sanctified.” This prayer she repeated, day and night, either mentally or vocally, as her strength permitted. Sunday, the 19th of May, she felt the most excruciating pains over her whole body, and towards half-past seven in the evening, though she saw no one, yet she heard a voice distinctly saying : “ *Next Sunday, at a quarter to eight, you will hear holy Mass in thanksgiving for your recovery. Keep silent on this subject.*” She had previously tried to read an abridgment of the Venerable’s life, and now perused it to the end. This effort increased her sufferings, which became so intense that she could not bear even to be touched, while being waited upon. Such was her restlessness that she was placed seated in an arm chair, where she remained most of the time ; and thus she continued in intense agony the first two days of the novena.

On the 20th, she imagined that some one was touching her feet and knees, but a diligent search revealed nothing. Strange to relate, though the picture of the Venerable servant of God had been dropped during the search, she found it again between her hands, without knowing how it came there. Thus matters rested till the hour of midnight tolled. At that moment she again felt something pressing upon her knees, and, immediately to her right, she beheld the Venerable who said to her :

“ *I am John Baptist De La Salle.*” “ *Oh, Venerable Father,*” she replied, “ *I am not worthy that you should appear to me.*” “ *On*



*Sunday*" he continued, "at a quarter to eight, you will go to Mass in thanksgiving for your recovery. Be silent on this subject: you are now cured." "Good Father," responded the grateful woman, "I thank you for all the favors you have bestowed upon me. I know and acknowledge that I am unworthy of them." At the same moment, she who had for twelve years been a victim to every pain, whose case had long since been abandoned as incurable by the ablest physicians, felt herself completely at rest, free from any pain, and passed the balance of the night in a peaceful slumber. The next morning, she dressed herself, fell upon her knees to thank God, and immediately after her devotions, attended to some manual labor. . . . Thus she continued till the following Sunday, when, unaided, she walked to Church, to receive holy Communion. As she entered the sacred edifice, though she had not thought of the matter to time her movements, the tower clock struck a quarter to eight. Six physicians testified to the miraculous character of the cure, and Miss Ferry was called repeatedly before the ecclesiastical examiners appointed to take evidence. Their opinion agreed with that of the physicians, and her case has been sent to Rome for final decision by the highest tribunals.

## II.

Another most striking miracle, one possessing many of the extraordinary elements of Miss Ferry's case, but which is still more wonderful in the reward given to lively faith, is the power shown by the Venerable De La Salle in favor of Miss Petit, of the village of Laffard, diocese of Bayeux. Till her 32d year she enjoyed excellent health and was even robust in appearance. From infancy she had taken a large share in the heaviest work to be done about her country home. In 1826, she lost her mother and was naturally much prostrated by this sad event.

It was during the following Carnival that two silly youths, wishing to frighten the innocent woman, dressed themselves in white, flowing garments, and secreting themselves in a part of the house where they knew Miss Petit had to pass, waited her entrance. So sudden was the surprise that, coupling it with her late loss, she was so overpowered that she fell senseless to the ground, from which she was taken by her now thoroughly repentant but thoughtless friends, to her room, which for sixteen months she rarely left, suffering almost continually from intermittent fever. Thenceforward, till her cure, her life was a series of acute torture. Abscesses formed over many parts of her body, chiefly on her left thigh, her legs, both sides, and head. Three times in succession, her thigh was cauterized; painful blisters were applied to other portions of her body where abscesses formed, and for three years she could only move about on crutches. To intensify her sad condition, partial deafness and almost total blindness supervened. Her limbs became swollen, and so great was her thirst that no amount of liquid seemed able to assuage it. Pains in the stomach and vomitings of blood were also frequent, and the latter became of daily occurrence. In 1835, while striving to look after the farm, she was attacked by a vicious cow, that struck her violently in the breast, and some time after, a painful swelling formed over the part attacked. Two years were allowed to pass by, without any serious attention being given to this new development, when the physician from a neighboring village being called, he pronounced the swelling as the incipient stage of cancer, for which there was no known remedy. Other physicians were of like opinion, and a more careful examiner having elicited that cancer was hereditary in the family, all hopes of human aid were abandoned.

At this stage of her disease, believing that she had but a short lease of life left, she made her will, and prepared seriously for her seemingly approaching end. Sleep became

impossible: food refused to remain upon her stomach, and to still further complicate the case, she fell upon an upturned lid of a large boiler, and so severely hurt herself that she was carried to bed, being unable to reach it alone . . . . Leeches were now applied to her breast, but some of these left sores which remained open, adding to the gravity of her case.

While thus a prey to the most intense agony, her nephew, a scholar in the Brothers' School, brought her a premium book he had received, entitled "*The Venerable De La Salle, the True Friend of Youth.*" While reading of the many miracles wrought through his intercession, she feels herself irresistibly impelled to gaze upon his likeness and to implore his intercession. At the same moment she places the book over her breast, and exclaims: "*Venerable John Baptist De La Salle, pray for me, that I may be relieved from my sufferings: I have great confidence in you; if it be for the good of my soul, obtain my cure.*" While thus engaged in prayer, a neighbor called in, and being filled with compassion at her friend's intense sufferings, promised to return the evening of the same day. Meanwhile, the poor invalid continued her prayer, and, while so engaged, felt an indescribable interior joy, accompanied by a spiritual light that filled her with happiness. It was then about ten A. M. of September 4th, 1845. Soon after, she felt greatly inclined to sleep, and fell into a gentle slumber of two hours' duration. She then awoke, feeling a gentle perspiration over her body, and an absolute freedom from all pain.

Immediately after, she arose, partook of food freely, without the usual disturbance of her system, and, at one o'clock when her friend returned as promised, she was astonished at the sudden change. Her curiosity led her to ask many questions, the first of which was about the invalid's breast. The poor girl in her joy had forgotten to examine it, and removing the light cloth which was the only covering she had been able to endure

over it, they both found that all traces of swelling, leech marks and other irritations had disappeared. The entire household were filled with astonishment, while Miss Petit continued to eat, drink and labor, as though nothing had occurred. From that time forward she was a model of health and happiness.

### III.

The above instances might well suffice, but we prefer to give one so recent and so undisputed as to show that "the arm of the Lord is not shortened," so far as the intercession of the Venerable De La Salle is concerned. America has given many instances of the efficacy of his pleadings with the Most High, but we select the following as one of the most striking.

Our statement of the case of Arthur Patrick Kennedy, of Brooklyn, will be given in a curtailed form from the data furnished by his own parents, who write :

"A. P. Kennedy was about three years old when taken ill at his parent's home, Willoughby St., Brooklyn.

The child was first seen by the family physician, J. Van Harlingen, M. D., who pronounced his trouble paludal diarrhea.

For some time this continued without other inconvenience. Later, towards February 21st, 1881, new symptoms appeared ; and on the 3d of March following, Dr. Van Harlingen declared that the child gave indications of *cerebral* phthisis, and asked to be allowed to call in a consulting physician. Prof. Armour of the Long Island College Hospital came, and declared that truly the child was suffering from brain trouble. Three days after he returned and stated that the symptoms though more alarming, had not yet fully developed.

Anxious to have absolute information in so serious a case, Prof. Hammond, of New York, was called, and after consultation, announced the sorrowful intelligence that the child was stricken



with *cerebral phthisis* and that his recovery *was absolutely impossible.*

When asked if there was not a possibility of his being mistaken, Prof. Hammond declared that he had never found a case in which the symptoms were more pronounced. "There is no hope," he said, "I am sorry to tell you."

At his request a soothing potion was given, which brought on a temporary comatose condition.

Later, Dr. Nolan, physician to another branch of the family, called several times to see Arthur Patrick, but without effecting any result. The child was now reduced to a mere skeleton, and for weeks lived on small portions of milk and diluted brandy.

When earth had failed, heaven was more earnestly called upon. A novena, made to St. Patrick, proving ineffectual, it providentially happened that Brother Botthian, Director of the Brothers in Newark (N. J.)—and formerly Mr. Kennedy's teacher, called in to see him, and, being informed of the sad case, induced Mr. Kennedy to make a novena to the Ven. De La Salle, promising, if a cure were effected, that his little son, if called to the Brotherhood, would join when of proper age.

The Novena was made, the following prayer being said:

**O** LORD JESUS CHRIST, who hast said : "*Suffer little children to come unto me ;*" who receivest what is done for the least of them, as done for Thyself, and who hast promised, by the Holy Ghost, that the *just shall be in everlasting remembrance*, we beseech Thee in Thy infinite goodness to show forth the glory of the Venerable John Baptist De La Salle, who, for Thy love became the Apostle of Youth. Therefore, we implore Thy blessing on the process of his beatification, that it may happily succeed, that so we may glorify Thee on earth in thy servant and by his intercession, come to praise Thee with him in Hea-

ven, where Thou livest and reignest forever and ever. Amen. *Ave Maria.*

"At the close of the Novena," writes the father, "our little boy, for the first time in three weeks, opened his eyes, and spoke. Three days later, he began to notice objects and to name them.

"At this point, Brother Botthian, hearing that the child was much better, advised a second Novena, promising that the Brothers would join therein. During both the first and second Novenas, the relic of the holy Founder was applied to the child.

"The close of the second nine days came. The child seemed so much improved that Mrs. Kennedy resolved to take him to Prospect Park. There she hired a child's carriage to give her restored son a jaunt. What was her surprise, when, instead of accepting the pleasure, Arthur Patrick insisted upon having his sister, four years old, placed therein, *while he pushed the carriage forward* a great distance, without any apparent fatigue. He was a cured boy!

"When called upon, later, Prof. Hammond still declared that the child could not recover. But, seeming to be annoyed by the situation, after his professional declaration that the child could not recover, the interview was closed. His last words, however, were: 'Do what you will, the child cannot live.'"

But, God is greater than men. The child not only lives, but for two years has grown, and waxed strong, let us hope, in wisdom and grace, a living monument to the power of the intercession of John Baptist De La Salle.

Do not all these evidences go to show that "now is the acceptable time to solicit heavenly favors through the power of the Venerable Servant of God, John Baptist De La Salle?" Divine Providence is indicating its designs in a most unmistakable manner. It is evidently heaven's wish that the cause of the Canonization of this servant of God should progress rapidly.

It is the expressed desire of the Holy Father soon to be enabled to decree this honor to the Founder of the Christian Schools. So far back as 1869, the illustrious Cardinal Pitra, protector of the Institute of the Brothers, did not hesitate in declaring that 'in the supreme crisis in which we now find ourselves, there can be no cause more opportune, no interest more pressing. We must,' adds His Eminence, 'build up the grand question of Christian Schools, the education of the people as a Christian generation, by conferring the highest honors the Church can bestow upon him who has taken so large a share in this work.'

"But, to accelerate and conclude this important work, most striking miracles are needed; miracles which will unqualifiedly indicate God's holy will. Hasten then, with all confidence, at this important time, to avail yourselves of the intercession of the servant of God. Let all who need the special effects of the goodness of the Most High to be made manifest in their regard, call upon John Baptist De La Salle with unlimited hope and confidence.

"The more difficult the grace to be obtained, the less fruitful your prayers seem to have been, thus far, the more earnestly should you do holy violence to heaven, through him whom heaven so evidently wishes to honor. Under actual circumstances, you should place no bounds to your reliance on his intercession. The Almighty only waits to find one whose faith will deserve to make him whole."

Oh! hasten then, all whose cases seem beyond hope! Call upon him, all you who have reason to dread lest those nearest and dearest to you are about to breathe their last. Better still, if there be among you one whose salvation seems beyond a hope; whose life is a protest against the belief in death; if it be a father, a son, a brother, sister or mother, who thus tempts high heaven, call, call upon him whose words on earth touched the

most hardened hearts, and your prayers will most assuredly be heard. Be of good cheer ; let courage and hope once more fill your hearts. Who knows ! Providence has, thus far, been silent, only that the glory of so great a change in body or soul may be granted through the intercession of the Venerable De La Salle, whose name he wishes to enrol among those whom "the King wishes to honor."





MONUMENT ERECTED AT ROUEN TO THE VENERABLE DE LA SALLE.

## CHAPTER IX.

*The hundred-fold here below.—The just eternally remembered.—The world not always ungrateful.—A friend of the child always loved by at least half the world.—“De La Salle, the benefactor to whom France should erect a statue.”—The debt paid.—Two worlds unite in honoring a Father whose sons are everywhere at home in two continents. Pope, priest, people, unite in saluting the statue.—The author of the “Redemption” writes the music to honor the intellectual redeemer of children in many lands.—Eloquence, music, painting and poetry combine to make the day memorable —Draped banners: the General deputed to salute the Founder in heaven.—Extract from Mgr. Besson’s panegyric.—Love and labor conquer where all previous efforts failed.—A universal wish that the Universal Pontiff can alone gratify. De La Salle waiting for a man of faith whom he will make whole. Who should implore De La Salle’s protection?—Two hundred years ago.—The world at the foot of the Altar.—La Salle in every heart, but still deprived of a niche in the holy place.—The New World in a new Cathedral.—Letter of Bishop McNierney.*

The shortest road to the heart of man is through his children. The people are not so ungrateful as the world pretends; he who proves himself their benefactor by bettering the condition of youth may look forward to generous and earnest recognition. History has rarely shown this more fully than in the case of the Venerable De La Salle. For two centuries he and his disciples had been loved by the juvenile world which they have instructed, and that older world which sees and appreciates the devotedness and self-sacrifice required to live such a life of mental and physical labor.



“The Abbé De La Salle is, to my mind, the type of the great, but modest man. The utility of his work, the perseverance of his devotedness, the oneness of his aim, all tend to make him one of the models most worthy of being presented to the admiration and imitation of humanity. . . Such was the man, the friend of mankind, to whom *grateful France should raise a statue.*” So spoke M. Droz, Member of the French Academy. So had thought many others, and yet the statue was not erected. It was while assisting at the celebration of the Normal School’s patron Saint, in Rouen, that M. Doudiet d’Austrive felt himself deeply impressed with the idea that the long-talked-of statue should be made to take form and place in the midst of those he had so faithfully served. At the conclusion of the service, M. d’Austrive made known his thoughts to the Director of the establishment, who, on the following day, having occasion to visit Paris, made mention of the project to Very Rev. Brother Philippe, Superior General. “If Rouen wishes to thus honor our Venerable Founder, she must bestir herself. Rheims is thinking of doing something similar,” replied the General. The hint was not lost, and in a few days the subscription list was issued, headed by a generous contribution from His Eminence Cardinal de Bonnechose, Archbishop of Rouen. Two worlds joined in the contributions, which soon swelled beyond the required amount. “What a pity I cannot write with both hands,” said a distinguished Protestant member of the French Government. “We erect monuments to men, whose ambition has caused the death of millions. Shall we not do at least as much for this saviour of humanity?”

“Here are forty pennies in honor of the 40,000 francs given to his poor boys by De La Salle,” wrote a little lad from the Provinces.

And thus the good cause progressed till on the 2d of June, 1875, the statue was in place, waiting to be unveiled to the ad-

miring thousands who thronged about it. On that day, all Rouen was astir in Sunday attire. Employers had given their workmen a holiday ; business was suspended, church bells rang out their merriest peals : bands of music issued from every train at the head of delegations from the chief schools of France. Smiling Brothers headed long files of intelligent-looking boys who marched to their appointed places in the procession which led to the Cathedral where solemn High Mass was to be celebrated. This was indeed the people's feast in honor of the people's friend. Though hundreds of thousands of strangers flocked in from every section, not a single arrest was made during the entire day. While enjoying themselves fully, all felt that they were engaged in celebrating a feast which demanded the fullest measure of Christian sobriety. The reputation of religion was at stake, for the friends of religion had it in charge. Bishops, priests, religious of every Order were there to testify their appreciation of the cause which called for such manifestations of joy and satisfaction. Art had been called into service. Painters had designed most attractive banners and mottoes, which floated in the morning air, and struck the visitor's eye.

But one banner was draped, that of the Brothers' Mother House. The General, shortly before, had gone to celebrate the feast with his father in heaven.

Music was there to charm the ear, which the bands of the Brothers' Colleges played with a skill beyond their years. Children's voices sang out the praises of God who had given them such a friend in the person of La Salle, his faithful servant, in the magnificent notes of Gounod's Cantata. Eloquence, in the pulpit, on the platform, and at the festive table, joined in making the celebration worthy of its object. Of the many brilliant orations spoken on that day, we can refer only to that delivered in the Cathedral, in presence of an overflowing congregation.



The following points from the eloquent Bishop Besson will be interesting :

“It is in the name of the poor, the lowly, the children of the people, of all who are termed the middle class, that I here apply to the Venerable De La Salle the prophecy of Daniel; it is in their name that I salute the rising star which will soon be above us in the galaxy of the Church. He is entitled to the double diadem awarded by the great Apostle, as well as by the prophet, to those who labor in the *word and doctrine*. (1)

On a day which is not distant, Rome will place on his brow the nimbus of the blessed. To-day it is Rouen that raises his statue and crowns it. And what a magnificent crown it is! Made up of children's smiles and innocence; of religious flowers over ten thousand in number; a crown in which are the virtues of soldiers, magistrates, representatives, whose services are recorded in the annals of the cities, provinces and armies of France! A crown of Bishops, the most beautiful that can be conferred, after that which the Holy Father alone can place upon saintly brows. . . . .

“The life of the Venerable is a model, his rule a law, his work the glory of France and of the entire Church . . . . We may therefore take time by the forelock, and, speaking the language of the younger generations, dilate upon the Saint who for two centuries has labored in two worlds for the amelioration and the salvation of humanity. . . . .”

We shall not here repeat the portion of the Venerable's life told in former pages. . . . . “The Venerable finds his end approaching; he had announced it, and was preparing himself for this final passage by the still more faithful practice of every virtue. He came to St. Yon, to die. There, the Brothers, whom he has loved with a special affection, will be with him to witness the scenes and lessons of his closing hours; from his ex-

(1) I. Tim., v, 17,

ample they will learn how a Brother of the Christian Schools should die . . . . But this school, which is to teach the secret of a holy death, will be none other than the school of the Cross; the glory which is to result from his death will be a glory similar to that of the Divine Crucified! The Cross! Ever the Cross! Till the last word has been spoken, the last breath breathed, the last pulsation of this heart, which has so loved the poor, will be from and upon the cross!

“And where does the Venerable expire? Seek all through that extensive series of buildings; find the most obscure corner, that nearest the stables, which at one time has been part thereof, and it is there that, having written his last letters, penned his final instructions, spoken his last consoling words, given his last heroic examples, it is there, in that humblest of retreats that he breathes forth his soul to God; a soul that loved God, the Church and the children of both; a soul whose last testament to weeping attendants, at once children and Brothers, was to love Rome, cling to her, make her thoughts their own, that being ever united with Christ's Vicar on earth, they may deserve the reward of a union which, to preserve, demanded heroic hearts. In the hour of death, he receives the bread of life, and leaves as another parting legacy to his children, a lively affection for this Sacred Flesh, love for Mary, in whose chaste womb it was formed, and of St. Joseph, who watched over and guarded the Mother and her Son. ‘The Saint is dead,’ exclaimed the highest authority in Rouen, and the cry was taken up by believing thousands. Yes, Rouen of two centuries ago declared the saint dead. But the Rouen of to-day, wiser by experience, declares that the Saint still lives. Rome will soon join Rouen, and instead of ‘the Saint is dead’ of two hundred years ago, or ‘the Saint still lives in our midst’ of to-day, she will proclaim a grander truth—La Salle, John Baptist, the Saint, lives in heaven—Heaven, through





THE DEATH OF THE VENERABLE DE LA SALLE.

Rome will place on the altars of the Universal Church the statues, the images of him whose noble form graces the public square nearest to the scenes of his labors. The whole world, repeating the words of her for whom he did so much, will exclaim : ‘ Saint Jean Baptist De La Salle, Pray For Us ! ’ ”

## II.

Were any proof needed of the universal interest felt in the life and work of the Venerable De La Salle, the feast of the Second Centenary would be ample demonstration.

In the words of the Very Revd. Brother Superior, it was intended that : “ in speaking of this Centenary the Institute might be able to say what the Psalmist speaks of the King’s daughter : ‘ *All the glory . . . . is within.* ’ ”

But, the world, of whose ingratitude we hear so much, or at least the truly Christian portion, thought otherwise. Parents, pastors, prelates, nay, even the Holy Father, thought rightly, that the Second Centenary of a work whose external results are shown by 13,000 religious, guiding 400,000 pupils, was worthy of public recognition. Hence, in a later issue, we find the grateful leader of equally grateful inferiors saying :

“ The celebration of the Second Centenary assumed proportions, and was attended with a degree of pomp and earnestness which we could not possibly foresee, and which we certainly never desired.

“ The zest with which the people entered into the celebration, the gratitude shown by our former pupils, and especially the zeal of the Reverend Clergy, chiefly in large cities, are above all praise.”

Elsewhere, the same General continues : “ It could not be otherwise, since, from the beginning, both the secular and regular clergy were among the special patrons of the Venerable



De La Salle. He belonged to the secular clergy of Rheims, many of whom gave essential help to the struggling Institute.

The ancient abbey of the Benedictines welcomed him to pray near the tomb of St. Remigius, where he planned his work. The Carmelites also offered the Servant of God an asylum among them, in 1684, to make a retreat before pronouncing vows of obedience and stability with twelve of his disciples."

And, had the limits of a short circular letter permitted, the worthy Superior might have added that the children of St. Dominic offered him bread, while the sons of St. Ignatius defended his reputation against Jansenists, and enabled him to perpetuate his work in Marseilles.

That the results of such a celebration should have a Providential bearing upon the reputation of the Venerable as a Saint, may well be admitted.

Of this an eminent writer says :

"Considered from the standpoint that God does all things well, the celebration of the second Centenary of the work of the Venerable De La Salle, bears upon its face evident marks of a Providential influence. When we behold the untold splendor with which the memory of the Christian Brothers' Founder has been celebrated, we cannot fail herein to find a public expression of the wish, thus so fittingly made known, that the cause of the Canonization of Jean Baptist De La Salle should be pursued with all possible alacrity."

How great this desire of seeing "honor to whom honor is due" being paid, may be inferred from the fact thus referred to by M. H. B. Irlide who says :

"More than one hundred and fifty Cardinals, Patriarchs, Archbishops and Bishops, from every quarter of the globe, have sent us letters, which we are to forward collectively to the Holy Father, and in which they ask that renewed efforts shall be made to hasten 'the final honors' to our Venerable Father."

Doubtless, inspired by sentiments imbibed from Albany's first Bishop, the present worthy incumbent wrote :

"Most Holy Father, a Prince of your Court, an Archbishop, seven Bishops, and two hundred and fifty priests have joined the Brothers and their pupils in celebrating the second Centenary of De La Salle's work. The only drawback to the festal day, one that was universally felt, was, that in publicly praising the work, we could not publicly invoke the worker . . . ."

That these requests have been favorably heard appears from the subjoined document :

## DECRETUM

ROTHOMAGEN.

BEATIFICATIONIS ET CANONIZATIONIS

VEN. SERVI DEI

JOANNIS BAPTISTÆ DE LA SALLE

FUNDATORIS CONGREGATIONIS FRATRUM

SCHOLARUM CHRISTIANARUM.

Per Decretum Sacrorum Rituum Congregationis sub die 23 Maii 1879 a Sanctissimo Domino Nostro LEONE PAPA XIII benigne concessum fuit, ut in Ordinario ipsius Sacræ Congregationis Coetu ageretur, absque interventu et voto Consultorum, de Validitate Processuum Apostolica Auctoritate constructorum super tribus miraculis, quæ, prædicto Ven. Servo Dei Joanne Baptista de la Salle intercedente, a Deo patrata feruntur.

Hinc Eminentissimus et Reverendissimus Dominus Cardinalis Joannes Baptista Pitra, præfatæ Causæ Ponens, ad instantiam Rev. Fr. Robustiani Procuratoris Congregationis Fratrum Scholarum Christianarum, et hujusce Causæ Postulatoris, in Ordinario speciali Coetu ipsius Sacræ Rituum Congregationis, juxta peculiare dispositiones ejusdem Sanctissimi Domini Nostri sub die 20 Novembris 1878 editas, constituto, ac subsignata die ad Vaticanum coadunato, sequens Dubium proposuit, nimirum :

“*An constet de Validitate Processuum Auctoritate Apostolica constructorum super miraculis in diœcesibus Rothomagen, Parisien, Aurelianen ; testes sint rite ac recte examinati, et jura producta legitime compulsata in casu et ad effectum de quo agitur ?*”

Sacra porro eadem Congregatio, omnibus accurato examine perpensis auditoque voce et scripto R. P. D. Augustino Caprara, Sanctæ Fidei Promotore, rescribere rata est: *Affirmative, seu constare.*

Die 13 Februarii, 1883.

Facta postmodum de his Sanctissimo Domino Nostro LEONI PAPÆ XIII per infrascriptum Secretarium fideli relatione, Sanctitas Suasententiam Sacræ Congregationis ratam habuit et confirmavit die 15 eodem mense et anno.

D. CARDINALIS BARTOLINIUS,

*S. R. C. Præfectus.*

Loco ✠ Sigilli.

LAURENTIUS SALVATI,

*S. R. C. Secretarius.*







# INDEX.

---

DEDICATION.....	Page iii
INTRODUCTION.....	v

## CHAPTER I.

The Catholic idea of a Saint.—Cardinal Newman's description.—These views dwelt upon.—The Saint best knows and pities human weakness.—John Baptist is baptized.—Early impressions.—Forecasts.—Visits to Churches.—Miniature Altar.—Exalted idea of the Priesthood.—Influence of the Crucifix and Rosary.—Devotion to the Sacred Passion and to Mary, Virgin most Pure.....	9
---	---

## CHAPTER II.

Influence of Early Training.—The private tutor; public Christian Schools.—Benefits of Emulation.—Young La Salle enters the University of Rheims.—Professor and Pupil.—Mutual Relations.—Home amusements.—John Baptist loves only Sacred Music.—Fails to learn profane airs.—Vocation.—M. De La Salle and wife consent, after a struggle.—Appeal to Christian Parents.—Result of one Vocation followed.—John Baptist receives the tonsure.—How he preserves his virginal purity.—Penances and other means employed.—He is named Canon at 16.—Impression made by the young Cleric.—La Salle goes to Paris.—Death of father and mother.—Return to Rheims.—Trials and Temptations.—Important lesson given.—Victory !.....	19
---	----

## CHAPTER III.

"Each one has a work to do, a mission to fulfil."—La Salle labors in another's field.—Use made of his influence.—What the Church has done for youth.—At work wherever a monastery is built or a Church erected.—A few schools mentioned.—What was taught.—Lack of method in schools of France at the time La Salle began his work.—	
---	--

His method developed.—Opposition.—Famine.—“ Providence the only basis upon which to build Christian Schools.”—M. De La Salle educates his disciples.—His “ Meditations on School.”—Résumé of principal headings of Chapters.—Schools for higher classes also opened.—How children should be treated.—Absence of corporal punishment.—Object lessons.—The School of Discipline.—Plan of St. Yon.—Where the Venerable lived.—Foreign Countries.—An event in Madagascar.

31

## CHAPTER IV.

Spirit and Virtues of the Venerable De La Salle.—The true test of greatness.—Worldlings judged by their exterior.—Why this difference of treatment is necessary.—La Salle's attachment to the Church.—Proofs of the purity of his faith.—Why he gave his Brothers “ the Spirit of faith,” as the spirit of their state.—His ruling virtue strong in death.—His unlimited confidence in God.—Exalted idea which faith made him form of the Christian teacher's dignity ; nobility of the Mission.—His constant practice of the renovation of God's holy presence.—Effect of his exterior conduct upon strangers.—Sinners seek him for conversion ; holy persons to learn the ways of God in spiritual direction.—His manner of reciting the Divine Office.—Respect for the Sacred Vessels, relics and other holy things.—Poverty everywhere except in decorating the house of God, and his Mercy Throne, the Altar.—Manner of wearing the Soutane.—Examples of his watchfulness over himself in all these points..... ,.....

56

## CHAPTER V.

Virtues continued.—How the Venerable preserved the angelic Virtue. Evidence of his Superior.—Sayings of St. Chrysostom.—La Salle's extraordinary custody of his senses.—An example of his extreme care on this point.—Amused and edified companions.—Confidence in God.—His, the result of faith.—With God for him, he cared not for men.—Striking evidence of unmeasured confidence.—How men proved false.—He divides his fortune among the poor.—His charity.—Forgiveness of injury.—His love of prayer.—His prolonged vigils.—Victory over self.—Kneeling on shells.—Christian wisdom.—Its marks given by St. Paul found in De La Salle.—Modesty.—Rules he gave after practising them.—Regulation imposed upon himself to preserve the holy presence of God.—How he treated delinquents and hardened sinners.—“ He bore their burdens.”—Regularity.—Exam-

ples of his great love for this guardian of the exterior man.—Conduct as an inferior.—His desire to be least thought of, except where menial offices were to be given.—The crowning virtue of his life.—Obedience.—He strives “to do all things well.”—Striking examples he gave of this most essential virtue..... 66

## CHAPTER VI.

The Father's example followed by willing children.—First Brothers formed by De La Salle.—His own career.—A corner of the veil raised. What a glimpse revealed.—Inferences justified by indications thus found.—His passion for suffering.—Brothers Jean-Henri, Bourlette, Joseph, Louis, Stanislaus, Irenée and Bartholomew.—Brief lives which filled many years in a few days.—Lives shortened to be the sooner with God.—Folly of the Cross.—The Virtues of Thebaid revived. Evidence of an eye-witness and Confessor.—“You do not try me; I am allowed to sink beneath the load of my crimes.”—“A loving image of the Venerable De La Salle.”—Bodily pain forgotten amid spiritual delights.—They spoke only of heaven and of the paths leading thereto.—“The Brothers' holy passion to follow in the footsteps of their holy Founder.”..... 93

## CHAPTER VII.

Vocation.—Call to the Institute of the Brothers of the Christian Schools.—Remembrance of the lives read in previous Chapter.—Doctrine of the Saints, especially of Sts. Thomas Aquinas and Liguori on the vocation to the Religious State.—Special excellence of the Christian Teacher's vocation.—Objections to follow an early call to the religious life.—Dangers of delay.—Exposure to sin.—Who should encourage youth to serve God in the life and work of a Brother of the Christian Schools?—False prophets sometimes unfortunately found even in God's holy service!—Value placed upon the Brother's life and work by His Eminence, the Cardinal Archbishop of New York; other expressions of esteem by Most Rev'd and Right Rev'd Bishops.—Words of Mgr. de Ségur.—“The blind man who sees well.”—A parting word to Catholic Youth..... 111

## CHAPTER VIII.

The power of prayer—Great is God in his saints.—The prayer of faith saves afflicted humanity.—The evidence required to constitute a miracle

acknowledged.—De La Salle favors the poor.—“I am John Baptist De La Salle.”—Where Doctors fail, a relic cures.—A happy family united after many years, at the Holy Table.—Another evidence of De La Salle’s influence with God.—After years of suffering, instantly relieved.—The value of good books well distributed.—A youthful nephew brings the remedy.—“The True Friend of Youth.” Confidence at the recital of others’ favors.—A moment’s prayer cures a life of pain.—America likewise favored.—Influence of De La Salle’s power at our doors.—“It is impossible for me to be mistaken.—I am positive.—The child must die.—The disease is incurable.”—The boy is cured.—A good promise.—Shall he be alone in giving himself to God?—“The harvest is great, the laborers few.”..... 1

## CHAPTER IX.

The hundred-fold here below.—The just eternally remembered.—The world not always ungrateful.—A friend of the child always loved by at least half of the world.—“De La Salle, the benefactor to whom France should erect a statue.—The debt paid.—Two worlds unite in honoring a Father whose sons are everywhere at home in two continents.—Pope, priest, people, unite in saluting the statue.—The author of the “Redemption” writes the music to honor the intellectual redeemer of children in many lands.—Eloquence, music, painting and poetry combine to make the day memorable.—Draped banners : the General deputed to salute the Founder in heaven.—Extracts from Mgr. Besson’s panegyric.—Love and labor conquer where all previous efforts failed.—A universal wish that the Universal Pontiff can alone gratify.—De La Salle waiting for a man of faith whom he will make whole.—Who should implore De La Salle’s protection.—Two hundred years ago.—The world at the foot of the Altar.—La Salle in every heart, but still deprived of a niche in the holy place.—The New World in a new Cathedral.—Letter of Bishop McNierney... 1











Deacidified using the Bookkeeper process.  
Neutralizing agent: Magnesium Oxide  
Treatment Date: March 2006

**Preservation Technologies**  
A WORLD LEADER IN PAPER PRESERVATION

111 Thomson Park Drive  
Cranberry Township, PA 16066  
(724) 779-2111





CT 81



N. MANCHESTER,  
INDIANA 46962

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS



0 014 237 835 8

